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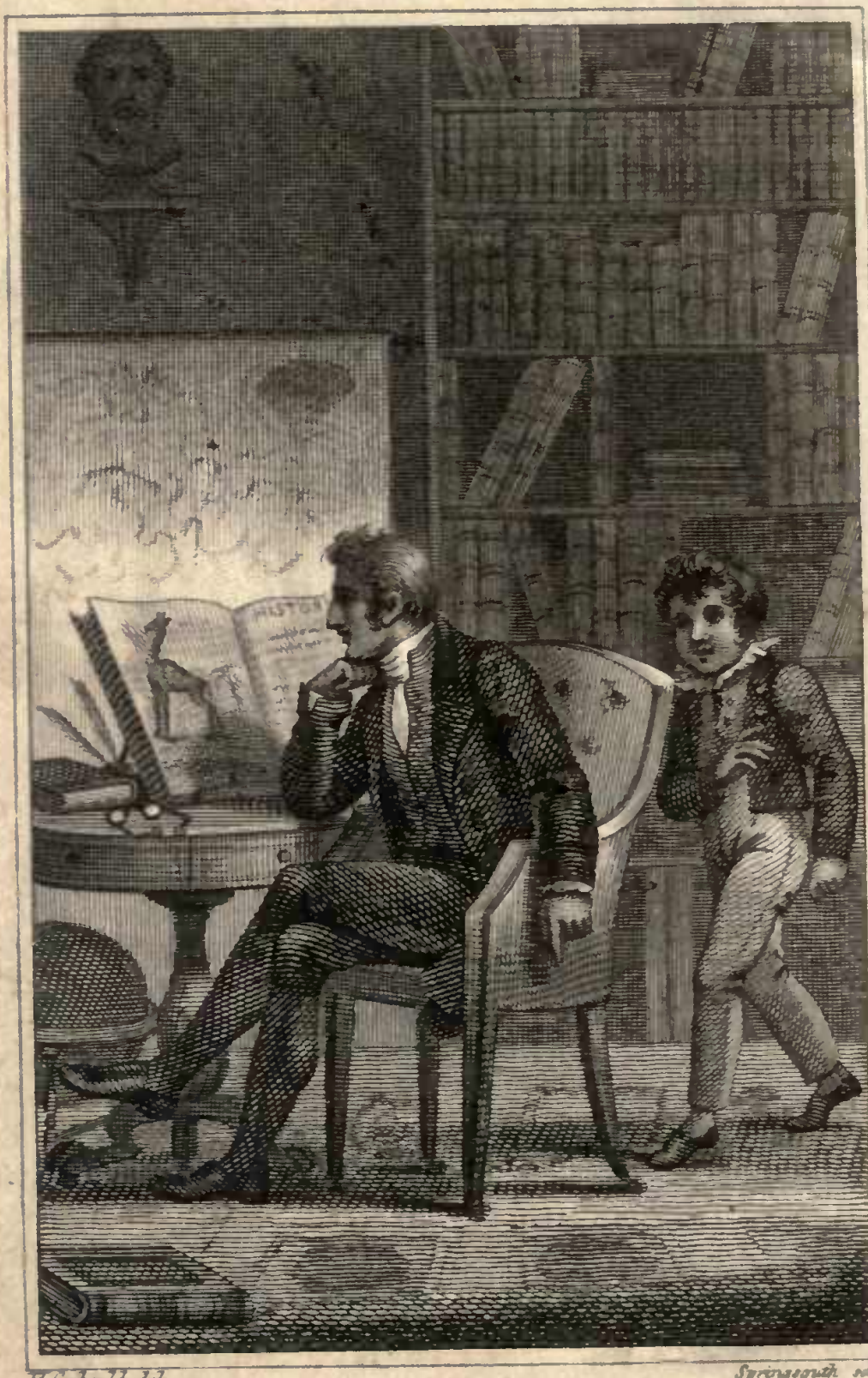

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THE KIND TUTOR.

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THE

PARENT'S OFFERING;

OR

TALES FOR CHILDREN.

BY

MRS. CAROLINE BARNARD.

VOL. I.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

THE

PARENT'S OFFERING.

THE KIND TUTOR.

"A wise Son maketh a glad Father; but a foolish Son is the heaviness of his Mother."

Proverbs, chap. x. ver. 1.

I WAS born at my father's country-seat in Somersetshire, the heir of a large estate, the hopes of my family, and the idol of my mother. My father went abroad when I was an infant, and is but just returned to England; so that the care of my youth was entirely left to my mother.

Almost the first thing that I recollect, was my sorrow at the departure of a favourite nursery-maid, who was sent away, because she had ventured to punish me for striking one of her fellow-servants. — Unfortunately, mamma happened to come into the room just at the moment when I was locked up in a closet, and was kicking against the door with all my might and main, and roaring loudly. I heard however somebody come into the nursery;—so I listened, and heard mamma say, What is all this? What is the matter?—Where is my child?

He is a very naughty boy, my lady, replied Sally, and I could do nothing with him; so I have locked him up in that closet till he promises to behave better, my lady.

For shame, Sally! said mamma. Do

not you know, I positively forbid any servant in my house to punish my child without my leave?

Mamma now tried to open the door, to release me from my confinement; but she could not, as it was locked.

Where is the key of this door? said mamma angrily.

I have got it in my pocket, said Sally. I will unlock the door this instant, if it is your ladyship's wish.

Sally opened the door, and I ran to mamma, crying and sobbing, and hiding my face in her bosom. Mamma took me in her lap, smothering me with kisses, while I looked triumphantly at Sally, and enjoyed to hear her scolded.

Poor dear child! said mamma, placing my hair in order round my face, and drying my tears:—he has almost cried himself into a fever.—Indeed, Sally,

I am very angry; and if any thing of this sort occurs again, I shall not suffer you to stay another instant in my house.

I hope, replied Sally, your ladyship will not take amiss what I am going to say; but I wish to leave your ladyship's house. I cannot live with so untractable a child as Lord Henry.

Very well, said mamma; then the sooner you leave me, the better, Sally. —I thought you were attached to me, I thought you were fond of my little boy.

I am attached to your ladyship, said Sally, (bursting into tears) I am very fond of Lord Henry; and if I may make bold to speak my mind to your ladyship, I think my young master might be a sweet good child, if he was corrected for his little passions and humours. But if he is never to be—

Silence, Sally ! said mamma. I do not allow you to talk in this way to me, —and before the child too. If you have any thing more to say to me, you must send me word by nurse.

Mamma then led me out of the nursery into the drawing-room, and there she placed me by her on the sofa, and brought me all the toys, pictures and cakes she could collect, to comfort me. Mamma would not let me stir from her all the rest of that day ; and it is with pain I now remember all the trouble and uneasiness I cost her. The more she tried to please me, the more cross and fretful I became.

I recollect very well in the evening seeing Sally come in with her bonnet on, and her bundle in her hand. I believe she came to be paid her wages, and to bid me good bye. She curtsied

a great many times, and asked mamma's leave to give me a kiss before she went away: but I was in a sullen mood, and refused to kiss, or even to speak to her.

When she was gone, I felt sorry that I had behaved so unkind to poor Sally; for in reality I believe I liked her better than any one in the house,—though she was the only one who ever ventured to chide me; and perhaps that was the very reason I preferred her.

I went to the window, and watched her as she went through the park, and began to feel sorry she was going away from me. I saw her stop, and put her bundle down, and I was in hopes she was coming back again; but she only waited to rest for a minute, for she soon walked on again.

When she got to the lodge at the

end of the park, and turned into the road, I lost sight of her entirely, and then I began to cry and scream, and to insist that mamma should send for her back again. In vain my poor mamma endeavoured to appease me, and told me it was impossible. The more she said, the more I cried. At last mamma was tired out with me, and rung the bell for nurse.

Here, nurse, said she, try what you can do with the child; for I am tired to death with him, and I cannot make him happy. For Heaven's sake stop his crying, if you can!

Blessings be good unto us! said the fat old lady, beginning with her old-fashioned sayings, What was the matter with the sweet cherub? Who was it has affronted my pretty boy? Come to its own nurse, and no one shall dare to vex him; and he shall have every thing he

wants,—a darling! Come, and feel in old nurse's pockets, and hear a pretty story—come.

But I was too much accustomed to all this jargon of nonsense to feel its effects. I struggled, and shrieked the louder.

Oh stop his cries! stop his crying, for pity's sake! said mamma; and she threw herself back on the sofa, and burst into tears.

I had never seen mamma cry before. I stopped the horrid noise I was making, and stared at her with surprise. I saw old nurse trudge off, and return in a great hurry with a glass of water, and at the same time hold something to mamma's nose, and I heard her say,—Indeed, my lady, you should not have the child so long; you have quite turmoiled yourself, my lady. I thought to myself, Then it is *I* who have made poor mamma ill. I believe I was

frightened, for I did not make another sound, but went up to mamma, and took her hand and kissed it. I do not know how long mamma was ill, or any thing more about it; for I was then taken to bed directly.

Scarcely a day passed that I did not cry for Sally's return, and I let mamma have no peace, so determined was I to have my own way; particularly as I overheard mamma tell nurse, she thought I grew thin with fretting for Sally, and she believed I must have my own way at last.

One evening mamma told me I should write a little note to Sally, to beg her to come back; and that I should send her a new gown as a present. I was very much pleased at this, and sat down to dictate to mamma, who wrote the note for me; though I do not know if she

wrote exactly what I told her. It ran thus:

'My dear nursery-maid Sally,

'Why did you go away from me?—I should have grown good again if you had staid. Besides, I wished you to stay. You should not mind my crying and being naughty, because you are a servant. I send you a gown for a present; and you must come back to me directly, for I want you,—and I will be a good boy.'

This was the note I sent, and this was the answer I received:

'My honoured master, my dear

'Lord Henry,

'I am very much obliged to your lordship for doing me the honour to write to me, and to wish for me back again. Indeed, I should be very happy to come back to you, seeing you are so

good to desire it, if so be it were in my power: but I am in place. I am nursery-maid to Mrs. Mills, and have got the care of two little boys, who are very good, and very fond of me. I return your lordship many thanks for the pretty gown sent, and shall keep it for your lordship's sake. I beg my humble duty to your honoured mamma; and wishing you all health and happiness, I am Lord Henry's obedient

and very humble servant,

SALLY MEADOWS.'

'P. S. I take the liberty of sending your lordship some puzzles, which I hope will amuse.'

Luckily for mamma, I happened to be very much pleased with these puzzles, as I had never seen them before; and they engaged my attention so much,

that I quite forgot Sally, and very soon left off talking about her.

My health became very delicate; I was constantly ill. I took no pleasure in any of my playthings, though my nursery contained toys enough to have made half the little boys in the kingdom quite happy. Though I was a great boy, and had been in breeches two years, I was constantly being petted up in mamma's or in my old nurse's lap. I never went out except in the carriage, for mamma was afraid of my walking, for fear it should fatigue me.

On the birth-day that I was six years old, mamma made me a present of a beautiful little pony, with a little bridle and saddle:—and now I never either walked, or went in the carriage, but rode out every day with a servant on each side of me; one to hold me, and

the other to lead my pony. I was very much pleased at first with this, because it was something new; so I rode every day, and all day long, till very soon I became as tired of my pony as the rest of my pleasures.

One day, as I was slowly riding on, being led a foot-pace, and yawning incessantly, I passed by a boy's play-ground; it was full of boys, who seemed very busy, and very happy. They were all engaged at some play or other; not one was idle. In one corner some little fellows were stooping down in a ring, playing at marbles; at another part of the ground a great tall boy was flying a kite, and some little ones standing round him, jumping and hallowing as it mounted in the air. Not far off a party were eager in the heat of a game

at trap-ball; and on the most even part of the green a set of bigger ones, with their coats and waistcoats thrown off, were in the middle of a cricket match. The boy who was in was playing very well, and was sending the ball to a great distance. I longed to try and play, for I fancied I could do just the same, though I never handled a cricket-bat in my life.

Lift me off!—lift me off! I said, impatient to dismount the pony. I want to go and play at cricket.

Indeed, my lord, said James, your lordship mustn't go into that there playground among them rude boys: your lordship will be hurt. Your mamma will never forgive me.

Let me get down, Thomas, for I will go; let me get down, I say.

In vain the poor servants tried to dissuade me; down I would get, and on the play-ground I ran.

Holloa!—What's that little fellow getting in my way for? called out the boy that was in. Get out of the way, you little rascal! or you'll be knocked down with the ball.

Give me the bat, I called out, I want to play, and will play. I am Lord Henry ———, and you must do what I tell you; give me the bat.

At this the boys began to laugh and point at me, some called me names. Give *you* the bat! said one of them; Yes, I'll give it you; and he lifted it up and was preparing to strike me with it; but James ran up and prevented him.

I began to set up a loud cry, when a good-natured boy came up to me with a bat in his hand, and said, Come! you

shall have a try if you've a mind; only leave off blubbering, and I will lend you my bat.

Oh yes! come, said they all, let's see what sort of a hand his little snivelling lordship is at cricket.

I snatched up the bat very proudly, and was going to show off, and play very finely, when I found it was so heavy I could scarcely lift it, much less strike a ball with it. I threw it down in a great passion, and set up one of my most tremendous roars.

Take me away, Thomas,—take me away, James,—Thomas, take me away, —take me home to mamma.

The servants hastened up to me, and carried me off in their arms; the boys all following after me, hissing and hooting all the way I went.

And now are not you almost tired of

hearing of my follies and passions? Well, have patience, I am soon coming to a pleasanter part of my history.

I did not see so much of mamma as usual; for she was very often so ill, she could not leave her room, and I was not allowed to go to her, for fear of making her head-ache worse.

One day as I was standing at my nursery-window, I saw a carriage drive up to the door. It was my uncle come to pay mamma a visit. He staid some time at our house; and he used to have very long conversations with mamma, and used to make her cry very often. I do not know what they talked about, for they spoke in a low voice; but I could perceive they were talking about me, and I used to try and listen to hear what they said.

Once I heard my uncle say, Indeed, my dear sister! consider; he is more than six years old; he should really be at school by this time, he knows nothing. His father will be disappointed in him. Besides, consider your own health.

Then I heard mamma say, I cannot, I cannot indeed, my dear brother, I cannot send him from me. And this was all I could hear.

The morning my uncle was going away he took me on his knee, and said to me, My dear Henry, listen to me: you have got a new friend coming to live with you, he is a very wise good man; he will be called your tutor: if you are sensible enough to be obedient and kind to him, he will soon grow very fond of you, and he will make you much happier than you are now. Nobody can be happy till they have

learned to be good, and this kind tutor will teach you to be good and happy. God bless you, and give you grace to become so!

My uncle jumped into his carriage, kissed his hand to me, and was out of sight in a minute.

One day after my uncle had been gone some weeks, my maid Susan took hold of my hand and told me to come with her. I had not seen mamma for nearly two days. Susan led me quite to the other end of our great house, and took me into the furthest room, quite at the end of a long gallery, a great way off from my nursery which adjoined mamma's room.

Here, said she, when she had shut the door, this is your new nursery, and here you are to remain; here you are out of your poor dear mamma's hear-

ing, and you may scream and roar ever so loud, and she will not be disturbed with your passions. Your poor mamma is very ill indeed, and it's all your doing, you naughty child! She is quite worn out, and you'll be the death of her at last.

I pouted out my lips at this speech of Susan's, but I did nothing more. My attention was called off at the sight of my *new* nursery. Far from being displeased with it, I liked it very much, because it *was new*. My little bed was brought into it, and the maids were bringing in all my toys by handfuls.

I went up to my rocking-horse, which stood in the corner, and patting it, asked him how he liked his new stables. I hopped and jumped from one end of the room to the other, and felt happier than I had been for some days. I

shudder to think how very selfish I must have been, to be so engrossed with my own pleasure, as not to be at all sorry when I heard my poor mamma was very ill.

Day after day passed away, and I was never once allowed to go and see her. I suppose she must have been very ill indeed; for I used to watch at the window, and I saw a great many doctors and physicians coming all day long to see her. I suppose I was not at all aware of mamma's danger; for I do not recollect feeling much alarmed, or grieved, on account of her illness, though I grew every day more miserable at not being allowed to see her.

I was weary however of scolding and crying, for it was now of no avail.

Susan took advantage of being out of mamma's hearing, as she called it, and scolded and punished me all day long.

It was to no purpose that I cried out, I want to go to mamma;—Pray take me to mamma. The doors were only shut the closer, and the less chance there was of my being taken into her sick-room.

And now I think any body might have pitied me, for I was quite weary of every thing;—weary of crying,—weary of being in a passion,—weary of my play-things,—weary of myself. With red sunk eyes, and a beating head, I sat in a corner of my nursery, speaking to nobody, and nobody speaking to me. The pop visits of my poor old nurse, who came in whenever she could spare a moment from mamma,

and was sure to bring me something to please me in her pockets, were all the comfort I had.

Oh, said Susan, one day,—I shall never forget her face while she was speaking,—I've heard a fine piece of news,—good news for your lordship, and good news for us all:—there's a certain person coming, who will soon teach your lordship another story than to sit moping in a corner all day long; then I take it there'll be lessons to learn, —and copies to write,—and a good caning into the bargain now and then, when it is wanted. Oh, it will be a good thing, my little master, when you are taken into tight hands: aye, aye, Mr. Hartley will set all to rights, I'll warrant me.

In this manner did Susan make the idea of my tutor terrific and odious to

me; and I dreaded his arrival, as if he had been a sea-monster coming to devour me. I saw, by the smiles and mysterious faces of the servants, that some event had happened; and at last I was told, my uncle was come to see me, and had brought with him Mr. Hartley, my tutor.

I was now dressed very nicely, and told that I was to go down into the drawing-room. In spite of the dread I felt for my tutor, I was happy at being taken down stairs once more, and going to see my uncle, of whom I was very fond; and, above all, at getting away from my nursery, and from Susan.

Without any resistance therefore, I suffered myself to be dressed and taken down. When I got into the drawing-room, I ran up to my uncle, and threw my arms round his neck. I believe he

was very much pleased with my doing this, for he pressed me to his bosom very closely.

He said to me: My dear Henry! do you remember the kind friend I promised to bring to you? Here he is. Go and shake hands with him.

I made no answer; but clung closer to my uncle, and hid my face in his coat.

I heard a voice say, Do not be afraid to look at me, Lord Henry; I am your friend.

Oh fie, Henry, said my uncle, do not be so childish, or I shall be quite ashamed of you,—and Mr. Hartley will think you are a baby.

Still I remained unchanged in my position. I heard my uncle and tutor whispering together, and shortly after

they talked aloud about a great many things, but not a word about me.

As soon as I found they took no notice of me, I began to move. I just ventured to look round, and take a sly peep at the stranger,—then quickly hid my face again;—this I did several times, but no notice at all was taken of me.—My uncle went on with his discourse;—so by degrees I turned round on my uncle's lap, and fixed a dead stare on my tutor.—To say the truth, I was agreeably surprised at his appearance. He was not that ugly, old, frightful monster I had fancied him; and he did not wear a wig, as I had seen in the picture; so that I was not at all frightened at him, though he was dressed all in black, and wore spectacles.

Seeing me look at him, he offered me his hand again; but I frowned, and

would not shake hands with him. I put my mouth close to my uncle's ear, and very gently whispered him, to take me up to mamma.

I cannot, said my uncle; poor mamma is ill,—I do not even go to see her myself, because I fear to disturb her.

Every day however, and almost every hour, — certainly every time I saw my uncle,—I repeated my request, Pray take me to see mamma. He always answered me with By and by,—Presently,—When she gets better, &c.

One morning I was taken down to the library, as Susan said, to begin my "schooling." I found my tutor there alone. He was sitting at a table, with several large books before him. I supposed that these were all books which I was to learn to read out of; and as I hated the thoughts of reading or learning,

I determined I would not do either ;—so I kept for some time in a corner of the room, and did not go near Mr. Hartley, or his table, or his books.

To my great surprise, Mr. Hartley took no notice of me at all : he neither spoke, nor looked at me, but continued turning over the leaves of his book with great attention. I expected every instant he would call me to him,—but no such thing,—he rested his hand on his head, and did not speak a word. As he turned over the leaves, I thought I saw pictures in his book, and I crept softly behind his chair, and peeped over his shoulder to look.

There I saw in his great book nothing but beautiful pictures of birds, and beasts, and insects, of all sorts and kinds. I was very fond of things of this sort, and never did I see any

thing that excited my curiosity so much: but I longed to see them more comfortably; for I was standing up on the bar of my tutor's chair, straining my little neck to peep: and my tutor turned them over so quick, I could hardly see them.

For the first time I ventured to speak to my tutor. I said to him in a timid voice, May I look at those pictures?

I will show them to you with great pleasure, said he. Will you come and sit by me, and see them?

Yes, I will, said I joyfully; and he seated me by him, and told me the names of them all, one after another. There were lions, and tigers, and a rhinoceros, and a giraffe, and hyænas, and birds of all sorts and colours. I never had seen any thing half so beautiful before.

I asked a great many questions, and *my kind tutor* answered them all in the most obliging manner, though they were very silly questions. I stopped him every minute to ask him, if that lion was stronger than that bear; if that elephant could conquer that sea-horse, and such foolish questions as those.—My tutor smiled; but he answered them all.

When we had got about half way through the second book, the bell rang, and Susan, tiresome, cruel Susan, came to fetch me to dinner.

Go away, Susan, said I pettishly; I do not want my dinner; I can't come.

Hearken to me, my little boy, said my tutor. I have shown you a great many pretty pictures, and I have a great many more still to show you; and besides, I have got a pretty story

to read to you about them all: but I read and show pictures only to good boys; to those who are docile and obedient. If you wish to come back to me, and to see what I have got to show you, you know the conditions.

I will be good, said I. Take me to dinner, Susan; and I went away directly.

Thus ended my first day's *schooling*, that I had dreaded so much.—Oh, how impatient I was for the time to come, that I might go again to my tutor and his pictures! I was now quite cheerful and happy, for I had a pleasure to look forward to; and whenever I was going to be peevish or froward, I was put in mind of what my tutor had said, and I stopped myself instantly.

The next morning came at last. Oh, make haste, Susan! said I, dear good Susan, make haste and take me down.

Hey! what!—bless me! how unaccountable! Lord bless me! how surprising! said Susan, as she combed my hair.—In a hurry to go down to lessons, forsooth!—There must be something at the bottom of all this. I can't make it out, not I.

I went, or rather ran down to the library, burst open the door, placed the chair myself by my tutor's side, and then exclaimed, Now for the pictures!

Now for the pictures! echoed my tutor with equal exultation; and he went on to show me all I had not seen the day before.

Then, according to his promise, he took another great book; and while I was examining the picture, he read me an account of the animal I was looking at. I listened to him with great delight; and if he stopped for a minute,

I remember I exclaimed, Oh, go on, pray go on, read some more, pray read more. I believe my tutor was pleased at this; for he always smiled, and read on again directly.

At last however, he stopped in the middle of a very interesting anecdote about a wolf and a lamb. I was burning to know the fate of the poor little lamb, when my tutor stopped short, and shut his book.

More of this another day, said he.

Oh! was the poor little lamb killed? said I. Do tell me, my dear tutor.

You shall hear that when you come to me to-morrow, replied he. The sun shines. I must take my walk while it is fine.

Won't you take me with you? said I. I will be very good.

I should have great pleasure in your

company, my dear Lord Henry, but I shall walk faster than you ride. Besides, I would rather not walk with the servants who must attend your pony.

Oh, but I do not want my pony, or any servants; I would rather walk with you alone, and then we can talk about the wolf and the lamb as we go along.

Come along then, said he; so we can, and so we will.

My tutor then took hold of my hand, and led me through some pretty fields and lanes, talking to me all the way, and showing me a great many of the insects and birds that I had just seen in the pictures.

So we went on, and I became every day more fond of my tutor: indeed, I think I had never loved any body so well before. He made quite a different

boy of me; I was well, and good, and cheerful: but I was not yet quite happy, for I had not yet seen mamma. I heard however that she was getting better; and I never left off asking my uncle to take me to see her.

One day I thought to myself I would ask my kind tutor to allow me to go to mamma. He never refused me any thing that was proper for me; and if it was improper, he explained to me why it was so. I therefore went up to him with my old petition.

Pray, dear Mr. Hartley, said I, when do you think I may be allowed to go and see my dear mamma?

My dear Lord Henry, said he, I will make interest for you, and I think you will then be allowed to see her this very evening. Your friends, my dear boy,

have thought it necessary hitherto to keep you from your poor mother, because they knew you to be once a perverse fretful child, who could not be depended upon for not indulging his passions even in his mother's sick-room. But I will tell them what I really think to be the case, and what will give them all joy and comfort,—that Lord Henry is an altered child; that they need no longer be afraid of him; that he will carry nothing but peace and comfort to his fond mother.

I threw my arms round my tutor's neck, and burst into tears. Oh tell them this!—tell them this, my dear, kind tutor! tell them this, and let me see mamma.

Mr. Hartley told me to compose myself, and then left the room. I suppose he went, as he had promised, to

make interest for me, for in a little time in came my good old nurse.

Come, my sweet one, said she,—you are to come and see dear mamma at last. Come along, my dear young master; but be sure now, you fall into none of your *figaries;* and he shall have some cake when he comes out of mamma's room, if he behaves well.

I remember I felt very indignant at this speech of nurse's, and thought she might as well leave off talking to me as if I were a baby. But I did not much care for any thing, or any body, just at this moment, so great was my delight.

Hush! hush! said nurse (holding her finger to her nose), you must be very quiet, my dear.

When the door opened, I saw mamma lying on a sofa, and my uncle sitting by

her. I crept in on tiptoe with my finger to my lips. I think mamma and my uncle were pleased to see me come in so softly, for they looked at one another, and smiled.

Oh, my dear George! I shall never never forget what I felt when I got close up to mamma, and saw how she was altered since I had seen her. Young as I was, this made a great impression on me, for I really hardly knew my own mamma. Her cheeks and lips, which used to be so very rosy, were quite white; her eyes dim and sunk in her head; and she looked terribly thin.

When mamma put her arms round me and kissed me, I felt her cry, for her tears wetted my cheeks and hands. I felt quite inclined to cry too, but was afraid nurse would call me to account, and take me away; so I swallowed and

choaked, and prevented my tears from coming. Mamma then made signs for me to sit upon the pillow by her; and there I sat, and mamma smiled and looked at me, but she did not speak. I believe she was too weak to talk.

I then whispered in her ear, and asked her when she would be well; and she said gently, Soon, love!—I could ask no more questions, for I was then taken away, with a promise of coming again.

The next time I went to see mamma she seemed much better, and I talked to her a great deal, and told her how much I loved my tutor, and what nice things he taught me, and what pretty books he had got; and I do believe that my talking made her better, for I saw the colour come into her cheek as I spoke:—and she cried and laughed with joy.

After this mamma got better and better every day; and I grew daily more good, more happy, and more fond of my tutor. I got on with my studies; for I minded all he said to me, and did whatever he desired me. And the pictures and the stories were now only produced after lessons were over.

Mamma got quite well, and came down stairs, and rode in her carriage the same as ever. My tutor said to me one day,

Look, Henry! look at your fond and indulgent mother. A little while ago she was on the brink of the grave. You, her only child, had almost broken her heart; but God in his mercy has saved her to you. Oh! be grateful to him for this blessing! Cherish your mother! and by your good conduct and filial attention repay her for all her

cares, and prove in future the comfort of her life.

These were the words of my kind tutor. They made an impression on my heart. I have remembered them ever since, and I hope and trust I shall never forget them.

THE BET WON.

In the pretty village of * * * lived Cecily, the sole companion of an infirm and widowed mother. She was about fourteen years old, and was so remarkable for sweetness of temper, prudence, industry, and discretion, that she was universally beloved; and in the village where she dwelt she went by the name of the *good Cecily*. Her poor mother, from an unfortunate accident, had become a cripple, to such a degree, that she could not walk across the room, or get up and down stairs, without great difficulty and pain. What a sad state must that be, when an unfortunate crea-

ture can never hope any more to walk in the fields, and enjoy the fresh air and the sunshine, which God has given to cheer the heart of man! Her health and spirits were broken in consequence; and her life would have been almost a burden, had it not been sweetened by the affectionate and assiduous cares of her virtuous child.

Cecily and her mother were placed above the condition of the absolutely destitute, yet many comforts were wanting which their slender means were unable to procure; and poor Cecily, whose industry was their chief source of wealth, was obliged to see her mother languish for many comforts which she was unable to purchase. The profits of her labour supplied their daily sustenance, and any extra-earnings, or chance supply of wealth, she as regularly ap-

plied to the procuring some little gratification for her helpless parent.

It was one fine evening in the beginning of spring that Cecily's mother (weak and infirm, and yet eager to enjoy the return of sunshine and mild weather), expressed a wish that she had money to purchase a Bath Chair that belonged to her next-door neighbour, and which he was willing to dispose of for the small sum of one guinea. A Bath Chair, we must observe for the sake of those who have not seen one, is a chair with wheels, made for the use of those who cannot walk, and therefore large enough to accommodate a grown person, and is drawn with ease along the level ground, by a servant, or even by a boy or girl of ten or twelve years of age.

Immediately it became the first wish in the innocent heart of Cecily to pro-

cure this comfort for her mother, and she resolved that all her little savings should for the future be stored up for this purpose.

One morning as Cecily was returning from milking the cows at the great farm, which was one of her daily tasks, she was met by Reuben, a young peasant boy, who usually happened to be in the way upon these occasions, and always helped to carry her pails to the house. Reuben was a simple industrious lad: he had been bred up to labour by his good father; and he was renowned in the village for his industrious activity, and dutiful attention to his parents. From his youth his father had taught him to be mindful of his duty. "Reuben, my boy, (he would often say) *duty first, and pleasure afterwards:*" and this maxim he was ever mindful of.

He was always the first at his work, and the last to leave it. His garden flourished better than any of his neighbours'; and whenever there was any good to be done, Reuben was the head and the promoter of it.

Reuben was fond of Cecily; he liked her better than any girl in the village. He had known her from her infancy, and he found that her temper and habits were well suited to his own. Whenever he saw her she was busied in doing some good. He never could remember to have seen her, like some of the young girls in the village, standing at her door, or playing idly in the road. She was always employed, and in the service of her mother. Cecily, for her part, regarded Reuben with equal kindness: they shared each other's labours and pleasures, and felt mutually happy in

each other's society. When Cecily had planned her scheme about the Bath Chair, her first wish was to communicate it to Reuben, and to ask his advice upon the subject.

I wish the chair was mine, said Reuben, you should have it and welcome, this very minute.

Thank you for your kind intentions, Reuben, she replied; but I could not, you know, have it this minute, as I could not pay for it.

Pay for it, Cecily!—do you think I should wish you to *pay* me for it?

I do not know what you would wish, Reuben, but I know that my mother would not like me to accept it from you without doing so; and I must attend to her wishes first.

Ah! that is true, Cecily:—that is just like you, and just as my father

taught me—"*Duty first.*" That is right, —quite right.

But it is no use to talk of what we *would* do, dear Reuben, I want to think about what we *can* do. The chair will cost about one guinea; I fear the summer will be over before I can supply that money merely from my own savings.

Reuben considered some time:—at length he replied, What can we do? Let us see: Miss Montfort's birth-day is coming on, and then you will be sure of one shilling at least. I wish it was Lady Ellena's custom to give us all twenty shillings a piece instead of one, said he, laughing.

I am glad you put me in mind of this, said Cecily: let us see, this is the seventh of May,—it only wants seven days to the fourteenth:—then, as you

say, I shall be sure of one shilling at least, and that will be a beginning.—I must have a little patience—that will be the best thing after all.

By this time Cecily and Reuben had reached the farm, and were forced to part to their several occupations.

The fourteenth of May at length arrived, and there were to be as usual grand doings at the great house. It was the custom of Lady Ellena Montfort to celebrate the anniversary of her daughter's birth-day, by making it a holiday and a day of festivity in the village. All the young peasantry ceased from their work on that day, and dressed in their best attire. They carried baskets of flowers to the great house, and were each presented with a cake and a shilling; after which they repaired to the

village green, and spent the remainder of the day in rural sports and dancing.

Cecily went with the rest, gaily drest, and obtained her prize; but when they were going together to the green, she excused herself from accompanying them.

My mother, said she, is very ill to-day, I cannot leave her; I must return home directly. I hope you will have a pleasant day, said she, smiling, as she parted from them; never mind me.

Yes, but we do mind you, they all exclaimed, running up to her, and taking hold of her gown to detain her; we shall have no pleasure if you are not here: we cannot dance unless you sing for us.

Reuben will play for you, said she, looking at Reuben to support her on this occasion; he will play and sing too,

much better than I can. As she looked at him, she observed his eyes were filled with tears.

Must you leave us? said he sorrowfully.

If I do not leave you, I must leave my mother, who is ill and wants me, said she.

It would be selfish in us to detain her; she must go, said Reuben very seriously; she will have much more pleasure in nursing her sick mother than in staying here. Go, Cecily, I will play for them.

Upon hearing this, they consented to part with her; and she was almost out of sight, when little Patty went running after her, calling out "Cecily! stop, Cecily! Let me come with you. I cannot play without you."

Cecily made a sign to her to go back;

but the little girl persevered in running, till in her haste to catch hold of Cecily, she let her portion of cake fall into the dirt.

It is well you did not fall yourself as well as your cake, said Cecily; but dry your eyes, little girl, and here is my cake for you, which you are quite welcome to.

Little Patty threw her arms round Cecily's neck, and kissed her again and again. She durst not follow any longer, but she did not return to the green till Cecily was quite out of sight.

By degrees, the loss of Cecily was forgotten, and the young party engaged eagerly in the sports of the day. Towards evening it was proposed that they should join their money together in general contribution to buy cakes and fruit, to make a feast and supper on the green.

Nay, I think that will be but a

bad plan, said Reuben; for when the feast is over, we shall be no better than we were before.

Many were of this opinion; but there were others who enjoyed the idea of a *feast* very much;—it was a difficult point to settle.

Let us put it to the vote, said one.

Agreed, said they all; "Feast, or no feast!" All for the feast hold up your hands. They held them up.—Now count.

The numbers were even; ten held up their hands, and ten kept them down.

Oh, dear! how shall we manage now? said they; this is unlucky. Now if Cecily had been here, this could not have happened; her vote would decide it. Oh, we know well enough what her vote would have been; we should never have got to the sight of her money.

Oh, no, said another, she never

spends a farthing for herself, or for any one but her mother.

I wish we could any how get at her shilling, though, said one of the feastites, for I do long for the supper; but it is a thing quite impossible, is not it, Reuben?

No, replied Reuben, not at all. I will bet you all any thing you please, that she gives me her shilling directly I ask her for it.

Yes, yes, we understand you, said they; indeed you are very clever, but we are up to you,—you mean that you will never ask her for it.

Indeed I do not mean so, he replied.

Oh, I am certain, said they with one voice, you would never ask Cecily for her money;—we defy you to do it.

But what will you *bet?* said Reuben.

Our shillings, said they.

Adone, said he, laughing: If I win

my bet, I receive a shilling from all of you; if I lose, I pay one to each.

Right, said they, that will be quite fair,—but with one condition: that you let one of us go with you as a witness, to hear that you do not tell Cecily that there is a bet depending upon her generosity, and to see that she, and she only, gives you her shilling.

Very well, said Reuben; but if you make conditions, I must be allowed to make them also.

Yes, that is but fair; let us hear them, they replied.

I have only one to make, said he, which is this: that if I win the bet, your money shall be paid to Cecily, not to me.

Oh, certainly, said they; to any body you please, when you have won it; so, chuse your witness, begone, and make haste back.

We must now return to Cecily's cottage. Her mother was very ill, she had not slept during the night, and she was feverish. Cecily had taken all the pains she could to compose her to sleep. She would not suffer a sound to be made in the house, but remained watching by her mother's bedside till about four o'clock in the day, when her mother fell into a sound sleep. Cecily was almost afraid to breathe, lest it should waken her. She sat motionless by the bed, looking first at the shilling she held in her hand, then at her poor mother.

I wonder how long it will be, thought she, before this becomes a guinea, and enables me to buy for my mother what she so much wishes for. Perhaps that time will never come: well, I do not deserve it should. I must do my best,

and then prepare for being disappointed.

Again she thought, How very pleasant it would be to be able to draw my mother about in the fields and lanes; and how much good it would do her! I do believe it would bring the colour back into her pale cheeks: She may well be pale, poor dear soul, she who is so lame she can never walk out in the healthy air.

As these reflections were passing in her mind, she heard a gentle tap at the door. Oh, goodness! it will waken my mother, thought she.

She peeped out of her lattice window, and saw a miserable looking beggar standing at the door: he seemed to be without shoes or stockings, drest in rags, and with every appearance of wretchedness: a bandage was tied round

his head, that half hid his face. Cecily crept softly down to the door.

What do you want? said she in a low voice. I cannot lift the latch of the door, because the noise will waken my mother, who is asleep.

It is not for myself, replied the poor lad in a melancholy tone, I would never beg so much as a farthing for myself; but my poor father, my dear mother—Here the boy's voice faltered.

I have nothing to give you, poor boy, said Cecily, you had better go to the great house, and tell your story; they will perhaps do something for you. No, Miss; if you will give me nothing, I am sure no one else will. My mother went to beg there once; she held my little brother in her arms; they were both sick for want of food. But she

stood at the gate, and nobody heard her, till an ill-natured man with a green coat, and gold upon his shoulders, went and drove her quite away. Oh! I will never beg at that house. But *you* will pity me, for I have heard say in the village, that you have a kind heart. The little children, as I came along, pointed to your door, crying out, *She* will pity you, *she* will not drive you away.

Cecily looked at her shilling.

This is all the money I have that I can call my own, thought she, and this was for my mother. I had resolved to spend it for her; it is therefore the same as if it was not my own. But yet——that was only to procure a comfort; this poor boy and his parents are in want of the necessaries of life. I

think, yes I am sure, it is my duty to give it to him.

Well! said the boy, if you will not give me any thing, we must starve, for I will beg of nobody else. My poor mother is waiting for me. I told her, I was sure I should have something to give her: but God's will be done! she must bear all.

Stay, stop, cried Cecily, who never hesitated a moment after she had resolved upon what was her duty, and she ran up stairs and threw her shilling out of the window. God bless you, heaven bless you! said the boy, as he picked up the money, and walked away.

Cecily's mother now moved. The stirring in her room had wakened her. She said she felt a great deal better, and able to get up.

What a sweet day it is! said she, as she rose out of her bed; this warm sunshine will make any body well. Ah! if I had but neighbour Morris's chair, Cecily dear, you might wheel me about, and I should get strong and well in a trice.

The tears rose in Cecily's eyes.

I wish to my heart, mother, you had it, said she; but as that cannot be, for the present at least, I hope you will not set your heart too much upon it; for it will make you worse, to fret for any thing you cannot have.

True, dear, said her mother, I must be thankful and content; and sure enough I ought to be, when I have you, dear, to nurse and tend me so kindly. I should be but badly off if I had such a child as neighbour Thompson has, *as* is doing nothing all day but dressing

herself, and minding her own pleasures. I would rather lose the use of all my limbs, than have such a girl as that belong to me.

Cecily could make no reply to this: and my readers perhaps are not sorry for it, as they are, I guess, by this time, impatient to know what is passing on the village green.

All play was suspended during the absence of Reuben, and they were standing in mute expectation of his return, when he came bounding and flying up to them, crying out, *Won, won, hurra, hurra, my bet is won.*

Fairly won, fairly won, echoed the girl who had followed as a witness.

Here is the shilling given me for asking for it, said Reuben. They all stood for some time silent with surprise.

Did you see Cecily give Reuben this

with her own hands? was their first question to the witness.

I saw her throw it out of the window to him with my own eyes, she replied.

Well then, said they, reluctantly giving their money, we have indeed lost the bet. It cannot be helped: it is very odd.

What dismal faces! said Reuben, laughing. Come, you shall not part with your riches so unwillingly. Perhaps, after all, you will think I have cheated you; so you shall e'en hear all about it.

They then gathered round Reuben, who confessed to them, that to procure Cecily's money, he had disguised himself as a beggar, and had related a pitiful story to excite her compassion. In no other way that I can think of, said he, could I have obtained her treasure, but I knew she would give it directly to

one who seemed to need it more even than her mother.

Generous Cecily! said they all; now indeed we are glad to lose our bet, since our money is to belong to you, who deserve it so much more than we do.

This was the more praise-worthy, said Reuben, because I know she had made a plan of saving every farthing of money, till she possessed enough to buy for her mother farmer Morris's garden chair, which will cost one guinea.

One guinea! said they all with great delight: why, let us see, ten and ten, there are exactly twenty of us, and with her own shilling which you have got, why this is just the sum. Oh, how very lucky!

How very lucky! repeated little Patty, clapping her hands.

You are all very good-natured, and

very generous, said Reuben. This is the way to make wealth a blessing to ourselves—to employ it for the good of others. But if you are really determined to bestow your little all on Cecily, I think you had better purchase the carriage, and give it her as a joint present, as I am certain she would refuse to accept your money.

Yes, yes, said they, I am glad you thought of that; she cannot refuse the carriage when we take it her.

After this was agreed upon, Reuben was dispatched with the money to make the bargain with farmer Morris: a happy errand for him! The farmer was very willing to part with it for the sum proposed, and Reuben returned with it in triumph to his companions.

They immediately with great delight set about to brighten and orna-

ment it. Not a hand was idle: they decorated it with flowers, and in the front they placed in large letters, FOR THE GOOD CECILY.

How glad I am we did not spend our money in a feast! said they; for by this time the pleasure would all have been over.

And the remembrance of a good action will last all your lives, said Reuben. Whenever you see Cecily drawing her mother about in this carriage, you will think of the pleasure of this day.

Lady Ellena Montfort passed in her carriage by the green, just as they had finished adorning the chair; and the little girl, being curious to know what was going on, went up to them to enquire. She was not content, till she had asked a hundred questions, and made herself mistress of the whole story;

and then she ran away to report it to her mother, who bade her return once more, to declare to the happy party, that she should order a feast to be laid out under the trees upon the green, for those good children, who had so readily parted with their shillings to join in a good-natured action. The children all thanked her a thousand times; and as they were going away, they gave three cheers: but the carriage drove too fast to allow Lady Ellena and her daughter to hear them, though they saw by their actions they had caused them great happiness.

The mother of Cecily, leaning upon the arm of her child, had just stepped out at her door to enjoy the serenity of the evening, as the little procession drawing the TRIUMPHANT CAR approached their cottage. The joy of Cecily

was such as every one but herself thought she well deserved to feel; but she could not help expressing much concern at their having robbed themselves for her sake.

Oh, for that matter, said they, it is only what you have a right to, for we made a promise to Reuben, if he could obtain your shilling, that you should have ours; and he won his bet.

How so? said Cecily with much surprise, I never—

Pardon me, dear Cecily, said Reuben, stepping forward, and taking her hand, pardon my childish frolic; but the poor lad whose father and mother were in such distress, and who begged so piteously at your door, was no other than your humble servant. You see my motives, and you will I hope forgive me.

Cecily's heart was too full to speak, but her look spoke plainly that she was not very angry.

The mother of Cecily was, it is true, much rejoiced to find herself in possession of the long-wished for garden chair, but much more so to perceive that her daughter was so universally beloved; for when she endeavoured to express her gratitude to the children around her, they answered, she must thank her daughter, for it was to her virtue she owed her good fortune; and that they were heartily glad to have it in their power to do any thing to give pleasure to the GOOD CECILY.

THE TRAVELLING BEGGARS.

CHAPTER I.

MARY was born of worthy parents, at a village near Ludlow in Shropshire; her mother died when she was an infant, and left her with an only brother, four years older than herself, to the care of their father, an industrious peasant, who maintained his children by the labour of his hands.

When his son Henry was old enough to do any thing towards his own maintenance, he from choice and inclination went to sea. On the morning of his departure he went to his little sister who was then only six years old, and of whom he was dotingly fond,

and taking her in his arms, he bade her farewell, and told her he should be a brave sailor and do his duty, for her sake; and that all the money he earned he should bring home to her. Mary did not then understand him, but she cried very bitterly because her dear brother was going to leave her. Henry, in the pride of his heart, displayed to her his naval uniform, and bade her dry her tears, for her brother was going to be a great man.

Mary, now the sole companion of her father, grew up to be the pride and comfort of his life—in his absence she managed his household with care and exactness; and on his return home at evening, she repaid his day's labour by her fond caresses and filial attention. When grown up however, her father, who held the interest of his daughter

dearer than his own, was anxious to see her married, and endeavoured to persuade her to accept the offer of a neighbouring peasant, who was in reality very good and amiable; and, being attached to Mary chiefly on account of her virtues, would have proved an excellent husband to her:—but Mary refused to listen to him, declaring that she would not leave her father in his declining years, when he most needed her services; and that all she could do during his life-time, would but ill repay the debt she owed him for his care of her helpless infancy. A short time after this, the disappointed Ambrose left the village where Mary dwelt, unable to reside so near her without being allowed to cherish the hope of making her his wife.

Not long after, Mary's father met

with a dangerous accident, which at his time of life proved fatal; and not all the tender care of his unhappy child could save him from the arms of death. Feeling that his end was approaching, he told Mary that the only thing that made him uneasy, was the thought of leaving her to the wide world without friend or protector; and that, if he could but see her married and settled, he should then die contented: and it was to comfort the heart of her parent, and to soothe his dying moments, that this dutiful child consented to become the wife of one, to whom her heart was not much inclined, and of whose character her father knew but little; but he promised to be a protector to Mary, and to make her rich and happy. This relieved the anxious heart of the dying father; and

believing that he had provided for the future safety and comfort of his child, he closed his eyes in peace.

After the death of her father, Mary wished to have remained in the village where she was born, but her husband chose to remove her to London; and here she soon found he could not, according to his promise, make her either rich or happy. He was idle and extravagant, and his wife endeavoured in vain to reprove and reclaim him. In the course of five years he died of a fever occasioned by intemperance, leaving his destitute wife the mother of two sweet children, without any means of providing for them. Upon her husband's death, her cruel landlord, to whom she was unable to pay the rent which had been due two years, seized upon her cottage and furniture, and all that belonged to her.

CHAPTER II.

MARY possessed a mind which would have done honour to the most exalted station, and her virtues seemed to rise in proportion to her trials. Trusting that God had not forsaken her, she exerted all her fortitude to endure the worst that might befall her; at the same time resolving to do her best for the protection of herself and children. The first thing she determined upon, was to endeavour to return to her native village in Shropshire: when once she had reached her native home, she did not doubt that some who knew her formerly, would furnish employment to her honest industry, and that she should be able to subsist herself and her little ones.

It was now the dark and dreary season of winter; her native village

was many long miles off; and Mary, who was of a delicate frame and unused to much fatigue, almost despaired of performing so long a journey; but love for the helpless innocents who clung to her for protection, inspired her with courage and heroism. She kissed her unconscious babes, wiped away her own tears, and taking her little Henry's hand, whilst she pressed her infant to her bosom, she set out upon her journey to Shropshire.

The whole sum of Mary's riches, when she bade adieu to London, and had settled the affairs of her husband's estate, as it is called, amounted to a couple of shillings and two or three odd pence. My child, said she to her little boy, we will not beg while a farthing of our own remains; this money will last us

to-day and to-morrow, and we need not be beggars till the day after. But the *day after* soon arrived; Mary's pockets were quite empty; and Mary's proud heart was forced to beg.

Oh, mother, I am very tired and hungry, said the boy, I cannot go any further.

Keep on, love, a little longer, and soon my darling shall have rest and food.

Look, mother, at all those houses we are coming to, shall we buy our dinner there?

Yes, love, if there is any kind person there who will give us money to buy it with; but we must beg first.

How shall we beg, mother?

Mary could scarcely restrain her tears at this question. Amongst the many things she hoped to teach her children, the art of begging had never occurred to her.

My dear boy, said she, when you come to yonder town, you will see a great many people walking about, and when you meet a lady or gentleman you must hold out your little tattered hat, and say, "Pray bestow your charity upon a poor little starving boy, whose mother has not a penny to buy him food."

The child laughed heartily as he tried to repeat this after his mother; and quite proud of what he had learned, he strutted on before her into the town: and meeting two gentlemen who were walking slowly forward, he placed himself in their way, and fixing his pretty eyes upon their faces, repeated his lesson.

Get out of my way, you little idle ragamuffin, said one of the gentlemen; what plagues these beggars are!

The poor little boy coloured up, and

ran hastily back to his mother; and hiding his face in her bosom, he burst into a flood of tears; whilst his mother could hardly restrain her own, as she felt her dear child sobbing as if his heart would break.

Oh, cheer up, Henry, said she, we shall meet with some good person soon; every body will not be like those ill-natured men. Oh, it is not manly to cry so; there are a great many bad people in the world: some will abuse us and call us idle: some will take no notice of us at all; but others will be kind and charitable, and give us what we ask. Come, dry your eyes: Ah, Henry! we must not be discouraged so easily, but contented when we get nothing, we must be thankful for the smallest trifle.

But I am so hungry! said the child, sobbing again.

Are you so? said a fine spirited little boy, who was just then passing by with his maid, and who was returning from a fair, where he had been buying toys, fruit and cakes in abundance. Are you hungry, my poor little fellow? Then, Hannah, give me all my cakes and gingerbread, I shall give them all to this poor boy.

Not all, my dear, said the maid, because you know you were to take home some to your little sister in the nursery, my dear.

A fig for my little sister in the nursery, Hannah; she is stuffing things into her little greedy mouth from morning till night; and you know, it was eating so much made her sick, and so she could not come to the fair. I will give them all, every one, to this little boy: so it is no use all you say to me, Hannah, said he, while taking the par-

cel out of her hand, which it was as much as he could do to carry; and spilling them as he went along, he threw them into little Henry's lap, whose bright eyes glistened with joy as he encircled them with his little arms, and ran to pick up those that were rolling away.

Come, master Edward, said Hannah, your mamma will be very angry with me, sir, for letting you stop to talk with beggar boys; pray come on, if you please, sir.

Master Edward however liked the looks of the little beggar boy so much, that he made some resistance, and looked back to nod and smile, as the maid dragged him off.

Sweet child, said Mary, looking after him till he was out of sight, Heaven bless your generous heart!

Though poor little Henry recovered

his spirits when his hunger was satisfied, yet when they proceeded on their way, he could not be persuaded to hold out his hat, or to speak again to the passing stranger; but he clung to his mother's gown, and looked fearfully around, when any traveller of the genteeler sort appeared.

It was natural that the poor boy, grievously mortified at his first little adventure at the day-break of life, should feel thus; but it is justice to say, that probably all over the world, and eminently in England, a disposition to soothe with kindness and relieve with charity the sorrows of the necessitous, is frequently to be found among those who are plentifully endowed with the good things of life.

CHAPTER III.

MARY proceeded on her journey, though very slowly; the interest which her appearance excited, supplied her with just sufficient to keep her from starving from day to day, and often procured her shelter from the piercing cold of the winter's night. The natural gaiety and high spirits of her darling boy rose superior to want and penury, and his little limbs became hardened to cold and fatigue; he had not lost the rosy colour from his cheeks, but his clothes were become dirty and ragged, and his poor feet were almost through his shoes: but his mother, who endured grief of mind as well as bodily fatigue, was so altered, that her own father would scarcely have recognised his once blooming child in the pallid face and wasted form of Mary.

One morning, as she proceeded on her way through the village of ***, she was met by a party of young ladies gaily dressed, who were laughing and talking together very merrily.

What a pretty child that is! said one of them to her companions, pointing to little Henry.

And how wretched his poor mother looks! said another.

What is your name, little boy? said a third.

Oh! cried Lavinia, for Heaven's sake, don't let us stand to question that little wretch! Ten to one he cannot give us any answer: here, I will give him a penny, which will be much more to the purpose.

Saying this, she threw the child some halfpence, and they all ran on, except Camilla: her lively and feeling

heart was struck with the wretched looks of the poor woman, and she suffered her companions to proceed, while she stole up to her.

Poor woman! she began, you look very ill: are these your children?

Yes, these are my children, sweet young lady. I am not ill, but I am faint with hunger and fatigue, and shall be very thankful for the smallest trifle you will bestow.

I have no money about me, replied Camilla, neither can I wait now to talk to you; but come this evening to my house, I shall be at home then, and I will listen to your story, and do what I can to relieve you.

Heaven for ever bless you! said Mary, whose heart beat with joy at the prospect of obtaining something for the comfort of her children. Heaven bless

and reward you! But pray can you show me the way to your house? for I do not know which it is.

It is that large white house you see yonder upon the hill, just by the church, said Camilla; ring at the gate-bell, and desire to speak to Miss Camilla Herbert, and you will be let in.

Saying this, Camilla, who was as thoughtless and volatile as she was feeling and affectionate, ran on to rejoin her companions.

What have you been staying behind for? said they all in a breath; and what do you think has happened since you have been gone?

I cannot guess indeed, said Camilla, pray tell me quick.

Why, Mrs. Temple has just passed by in her carriage, and has invited us all to go to her house this evening, to

celebrate Twelfth Night; and there is to be music and dancing, will it not be very nice?

Oh, delightful, said Camilla; dear Mrs. Temple, how I love her! she is so very good-natured!

My dear mamma, said Camilla when she got home, Mrs. Temple has invited me to a dance this evening; I may go, may I not?

Surely, my love, said her mother; I have no objection, provided I may trust to my dear Camilla, that her high spirits will not make her forget to act like herself, and as if her mother was present.

No, indeed, you may rely on me: and, dear mamma, what shall I wear?

Your white muslin frock, my dear, and your white shoes and gloves; what can you wear prettier?

Oh! my plain frock, mamma! Why my cousins and the Miss Temples will all be drest better than that.

And what should you call better, Camilla?

Why, mamma, if it was not quite, exactly *plain*; if it was trimmed for instance with bugles.

You are welcome to trim your frock with bugles, if you think it worth while, my love; you will find plenty in my drawer.

So intent was Camilla upon the thoughts of the frock, the bugles and the ball, that poor Mary and her famished babes were wholly forgotten; nor did she once think of the appointment she had made with them. She jumped into the carriage that waited for her at the door, and thinking of nothing but of the pleasure she was go-

ing to enjoy, she drove away to the ball.

The carriage had not been out of sight above a quarter of an hour, when Mary with an anxious heart approached towards the house, and rang gently at the gate-bell. The servant came, and asked her business. She replied in a trembling voice, that she cam by the lady's own order, to speak to Miss Camilla Herbert.

She is not at home, replied the servant; and if she was, she would not see any one at this time in the evening, I'll answer for it: so go your ways, my good woman, said he, and shut and locked the gate.

Poor Mary was sadly disappointed at this, but she could not believe that so sweet a young lady could mean to deceive her; and thinking she would return home some time in the evening,

she sat herself down by the side of the gate, to wait for her. She hushed her baby to sleep upon her bosom; and the little boy stood watching through the bars of the gate, for the good lady, as he called her. Oh! I wish she would come, mother! said he, for we have had no supper to-night, and she would give us some.

She will come soon, dear, we must be patient.

She's coming, she's coming, I see her, said the child, clapping his hands, as he descried a female figure at a distance: but it was only one of the maid-servants passing through the court-yard. Oh, no, that is not she, sorrowfully continued he, as the form disappeared; and tired of watching, he sat down by his mother, and looked piteously in her face, without saying a word.

The evening passed away, and cold night came on. Mary gave up all hopes of seeing the young lady who had promised her so much, and with a heavy heart she went to seek shelter from the cold night-air. Her mind had been so wholly engrossed with the thoughts of what Camilla had promised her, that she had neglected to secure a night's shelter any where, and now she had not a farthing of money in her purse. She did not go far however, before she discovered the ruins of an antient abbey, and beneath these she determined to seek shelter for the night: she covered her baby with her cloak, and hushed it to sleep with her voice, which was sweet and plaintive.

SONG.

Come, gentle sleep, thy aid supply,
And close my baby's tearful eye;
The wind shall sing its lullaby.

Forsake not thou the babes I press,
For ah! their infant dreams I guess
Are sweet, and full of happiness.

Soon must the airy vision fly,
And they must ope the joyless eye
To see life's sad reality.

Well, shortly life itself, I deem,
Its joys, its sorrows, all shall seem
Like memory of a passing dream.

There is a sleep, my children dear,
And well I feel that sleep is near,
Which shall no future waking fear.

Close then, my babes, the wakeful eye,
Your watchful mother still is nigh,
And winds shall murmur lullaby.

The children slept soundly, though the howling wind shook the ruins that sheltered them, and their mother trem-

bled lest its broken fragments should fall upon her sleeping babes.

Meanwhile the thoughtless Camilla, full of spirits and gaiety, was the life of the juvenile party assembled at Mrs. Temple's. Ah, little thought she, as she danced along, of the wretched mother who had so lately excited her pity and compassion. When the young party were assembled at supper however, Mrs. Temple enquired how it happened that she had not seen Camilla in the morning with the rest of her companions.

Oh, replied the little Augusta, Camilla was staying behind, to pity a poor beggar woman.

I am sure then, my love, she was well employed, said Mrs. Temple, and I shall not regret not having seen her among you.

These words brought to Camilla's recollection the morning's adventure, and she hung her head and coloured deeply. Mrs. Temple (supposing that this was owing to bashful modesty, and that she felt distressed at hearing her praises in public) smiled upon her with a look of approbation, and hastened to change the conversation.

But Camilla still felt confused, and was inattentive to all that passed. Her imagination presented to her the poor woman enquiring for her at the gate, and turned away by the servants; the famished little boy, with tears in his eyes, imploring food; and the disappointed mother crying out, Cruel, cruel Miss Camilla! As these thoughts occurred to her, she cast her eyes upon the cakes and viands that covered the table before her, and heaved a deep sigh.

As they drove home at night, the children, in high spirits, talked over all that had happened during the evening, with gay delight; but they strove in vain to recall Camilla's spirits. She sat pensive in a corner of the carriage, and looked out at the window without saying a word.

The moon now appeared from behind a cloud; and as the carriage went slowly up hill, it shone upon some white ruins which appeared near the road-side; and beneath one of the broken arches, Camilla beheld the form of a woman, with two sleeping children. The almost heart-broken Camilla recognised Mary and her babes. Ah! wretched mother, thought she, is it thus you have passed the wintry night? Oh, mamma, what will you think of your Camilla, when you hear all this? Saying this,

she hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

The next morning she rose very early, and enquired of the servants if a poor woman had been there to ask for her; and being answered in the affirmative, she desired one of them to go directly in search of her, as perhaps she might not yet have left the village; and she promised a reward to any one who could find the poor beggars. But the search was vain. Mary with the first dawn of light had set out in the prosecution of her journey, and was already at some distance from the unhappy Camilla and the village of * * *.

CHAPTER IV.

WINTER was now passing away, and the face of nature assumed a livelier aspect. Mary felt her heart revive within her at the approach of spring. She had sustained the hardships to which the rigours of winter had exposed her, and had already travelled very far, so that she did not fear reaching her journey's end in safety. Nature, said she, will be kinder to us than fortune; the warm sun, the singing birds, and the wild flowers, are pleasures which even my destitute children may enjoy.

It was one fine evening towards sunset, as Mary and her children were enjoying the pleasures of the lengthened day and mild weather, that they passed

by a little white cottage upon which the sun was shining, and they stopped before its wicker-gate to look at it.

It was almost covered with roses and woodbine. A nice-looking old woman was sitting at the door knitting; a young and pretty girl was standing by her, feeding her poultry; and a little child, apparently about two years old, was seated on the grass, hugging a white chicken to her bosom.

Ah! thought Mary, here is a picture of comfort and happiness. It reminds me of my father's cottage; of my dear brother, whom I may never see again, and of those happy days which in our infancy we passed together. Oh, my dear children, had you but a home like this! And she looked at them sorrowfully, while the tears trickled down her cheeks.

Her little boy, peeping through the wicker-gate, soon caught the attention of Lucy, which was the name of the young girl before mentioned, and she immediately ran up to him to ask his name, and to have a nearer view of his pretty countenance. But when she perceived the wretched mother and baby, her smiles were changed to looks of the tenderest compassion. After asking her many questions, and receiving a brief account of her sad history, Lucy opened the gate, saying, Come in, come in here and rest yourself, poor woman, and I will bring you something to eat.

Instantly the pleased little Henry ran in to the garden and the chickens; but Mary made some hesitation about entering, till Lucy, with the sweetest conde-

scension, took her by the hand and led her in.

Who have we got here, child? said the old woman, stopping her work, and looking through her spectacles.

A poor creature who is travelling a long journey with two helpless children, said Lucy.

Sit down, sit ye down and welcome, said the grandmother; and, Lucy dear, run and fetch them something to eat and drink, for they are no impostors, I see by their looks; and God forbid we should turn them from the door without doing something to comfort them!

Lucy now disappeared, but soon returned with a nice bowl of milk, and some bread and cheese, of which she pressed Mary to eat; at the same time calling to the little boy, who was still eagerly engaged with Lucy's sister and

the chickens: he soon left them however, when he saw the bread and milk held up to him.

While Mary was refreshing herself with the frugal meal, Lucy took the baby from its mother's weary arms: but she was shocked at the tattered rags with which its limbs were clothed: and she thought within herself, that she had many half-worn clothes that she could well spare, and that would be very acceptable to the poor infant.

She knew that its mother, in her present condition, was unable to fit and repair them; and therefore when she left the cottage, she told her, if she would call again the next day, she should have something else to give her; and after they were gone, she set to work, and employed the whole evening in making baby-clothes for the poor little infant.

It was the custom of the village in which Lucy lived, for all the young peasantry to assemble as soon as it was light on May morning, each of the girls bringing a garland in her hand, of her own making, and depositing her rural tribute upon a table beneath a large oak tree which stood upon the village-green; and she whose garland was by general consent selected as the prettiest, was chosen QUEEN OF THE MAY.

Lucy, my dear, said the old grandmother, as they were sitting together in the evening, I am glad to see you so industriously and so charitably employed; but do not you remember, dear, that this is the eve of May-day, and you will not have got your garland ready? You know, dear, you might make those tomorrow evening.

Ah, no, my dear grandmother, I could

not; for the poor woman is so anxious to finish her journey to her native village in Shropshire, that she would not like to be detained here a whole day for any thing. I dare say I shall have time to gather some flowers, and make up my garland in the morning, if I get up very early.

Ah, lack-a-day! but you will have no chance of being queen, if you do it all in such a hurry. Ah, I warrant there's all neighbours' girls have been out all day, seeking over every field and hedge for all the prettiest flowers they can find: that was my way, when I was a girl; and it was your poor mother's too: and many is the good time we have both been made queen: and indeed it would do my old eyes good to see the crown upon my darling's head, said she, laying her withered hand upon Lucy's

flaxen hair, and looking persuasively in her face as she spoke.

But how, said Lucy, can I disappoint this poor woman, to whom I have promised this present to-morrow? Indeed, dear grandmother, I should like very much to be Queen of the May; but to clothe that poor infant, and make its mother happy, would be a much greater pleasure to me.

Heaven bless you, my dear sweet child! said the old woman, while the tears ran down her cheeks; and it gives me more pleasure to see you so good and feeling, than to see you queen, if it were *Queen of England*. Go on with your work, dear, I am sure I will not hinder you. She did go on with her work, and long after her grandmother and her little brother were fast asleep; for she sat up half the night to complete it.

CHAPTER V.

FULL of gratitude to the kind cottagers, and hearing as she passed through the village that it was the eve of May day, Mary proposed to her little boy, that they should go in search of some pretty flowers, and make up a garland to take in the morning as a present to their young benefactress. As they passed by the gate of a fine house, a little girl who was looking over it, observed Mary's little boy holding something carefully tied up in a handkerchief.

What have you got there? she asked him.

Only some violets and wild roses, said the boy.

And what are you going to do with them? said she.

Mother is going to tie them up into a pretty garland, said the boy smiling.

Well, said the little girl, gathering as she spoke a bunch of some beautiful moss-roses and lilies of the valley out of her garden; these will make a great show in your garland, will they not?

Oh, thank you, thank you, said the child, receiving them into his hands, while his eyes sparkled with joy: look, mother, dearest mother, see what the lady has given us!

Oh, these are beautiful indeed! said Mary; we need not now be ashamed of our present.

They then sat down under a tree to arrange the flowers and make the garland; which Mary did very prettily, for she had been used to such employments in her happier days. Those days were now again brought to her recol-

lection; and she talked of the time when her brother would range the fields to bring flowers to throw in her lap, while she amused herself with making them into garlands.

Ah, my dear brother, said she, you are far, very far away; but I will still cherish the hope, that one day, one happy day, I shall see you again. Amidst all my sorrow and distress, this hope supports and comforts me.

Though Lucy lay down to rest much pleased with the thoughts of having finished her work, and anticipated with pleasure the poor woman's joy the next day, yet she could not help feeling a sort of dread of the approaching morning, when she knew that her companions, who were very fond of her, would be mortified and angry if she did not attend their annual sports, or if she had not

her garland to produce with the rest. Notwithstanding however the different thoughts which filled her mind, she was so tired, that she soon fell into a sound and sweet sleep, which was not broken till the merry voices of her companions under the windows awakened her.

She rose instantly, and dressed herself with the greatest haste, while they continued singing and playing at the door. There was all the merry troop of villagers assembled; all the girls with garlands in their hands, singing, and playing on the tabor and pipe. Poor Lucy was quite afraid to be seen; so she kept away from the window, and fastened the door, lest any of them should come in; and then stood trembling, with her finger on her lips, listening to them while they sung.

SONG.

Come, lads and lasses, now be gay,
And celebrate the morn of May
With dance and song, and holiday.

See, the sun has left his bed,
Hasten then with lively tread
To dance upon the flowery mead.

Oh! why does Lucy thus delay,
While all around her pipe and play,
To celebrate the morn of May?

Come, said they, after the song was ended, we cannot stay here all day, if she does not choose to come.

Oh, I would wait for her all day, said Henrietta.

She must have some good reason for staying away, said another; perhaps her grandmother is ill.

Oh, I dare say, said Mary, she is only staying to finish making up her garland: she will be here presently.

Well, let us move on then slowly, and perhaps she will overtake us, said Frank, with a deep sigh. I shall be very sorry if she does not come, for there will be no pleasure without her.

As the sound of their voices ceased, Lucy ventured to approach the window; but, when she saw the gay procession all moving so slowly from the door, knowing that she could not follow them, she hid her face with both her hands, and burst into tears.

When she raised her head, and again looked out of the window, who did she see at the garden-gate, but Mary's little rosy boy, smiling, and holding up one of the prettiest garlands of flowers that was ever tied?

She instantly ran down to him, taking with her the bundle of baby-clothes, which, together with a pair of shoes for

the boy, she presented to their mother. She received the garland with smiles, expressive of joy and gratitude.

Thank you a thousand times, said she: if this is chosen as the prettiest, I shall be queen of the May; but I must make great haste, or I shall not be in time. So saying, she hastily tied on her straw-hat, and set off with the greatest agility.

Mary's curiosity was excited by the merry groupe which she saw at a distance, and by Lucy's great impatience to overtake them; and wishing to know the fate of her garland, she followed the procession at a little distance; and when it halted beneath a spreading oak-tree on the green, she placed herself at a convenient distance, where she thought she might not be observed, but where

her little boy and herself could be spectators of all that passed.

While witnessing this scene of rural gaiety, she could have fancied that she was again a rural villager, the happiest of the surrounding groupe; but soon the recollection of her real condition made the tears steal silently down her cheeks; while her little boy, happy in the possession of his new shoes, clapped his hands, and jumped for joy at all he saw and heard.

The village-green now presented a pretty and interesting scene; seats were placed upon it for the mothers and grandmothers of the young people, who delighted to witness the sports of their children, and thus to have the happy days of their youth recalled to their memory. The table beneath the spread-

ing oak-tree was covered with garlands of flowers ;—in the midst of them, the roses and lilies, which the good-natured young lady had given to Mary's little boy, shone conspicuous. Who will doubt, that it was chosen as the prettiest by unanimous consent?

The crown was placed upon the head of Lucy, who raised her eyes with smiles towards her grandmother, seeming to say, I know this gives you pleasure.

At the same time she looked towards a white gate at a little distance, upon which she observed with pleasure Mary and her children to be resting. She saw that the little boy was pointing towards her with his finger, and talking eagerly to his mother.

The pipe and tabor now struck up, and the dance began.

When they were weary of the exercise, it was customary for them to place their queen upon a throne, which they had erected for her, formed of turf and clay, and adorned with flowers; and when she was seated, they placed themselves round her, while she related to them some anecdote or story.

When they were thus assembled round Lucy, in a sweet and pathetic voice she told them Mary's sad history.

"A poor woman," said she, "that "was born in Shropshire, had the mis- "fortune to lose her husband, to whom "she had been married four years. The "same week that made her a widow, saw "her also stripped of every gown, and "table, and chair, she had in the world. "She had two children; and she was in "London, a hundred and forty miles "from her friends; and she had but little

" more than two shillings in her pocket.
" So she set out with her children, to
" walk from London to Ludlow."

It is not necessary for us to go over all the particulars of Lucy's tale: it is sufficient to say, that she related it so sweetly, and made it so affecting, that all her young auditors shed tears of pity at the sad recital.

When she had ended, they asked eagerly, if it were a true story?

Yes, my dear companions, it is indeed true,—much too true; and, if you like it, I can bring to you the sad, yet real heroine of my tale.

Oh, do so! we should like it, said they, with one voice.

Lucy immediately rose and beckoned to Mary, who still remained watching her:—she approached timidly towards them, and her interesting ap-

pearance well accorded with the description they had just heard of her. They rose, and agreed to join together their little stores, and raise a subscription for her; and when they had done so, the sum appeared to Mary a very considerable one. She received it with a flood of tears, and raising her meek eyes to Heaven, she thanked God for the unexpected succour, and prayed that he would bless the sweet children who bestowed it.

The evening sun now set in the golden west,—the children sought shelter in the thatched cottages of the hamlet. There the remembrance of the good action they had been enabled to perform, afforded them more pleasure than all the festivities of the preceding day. Mary also left the green, and with a lightened heart pursued her way.

CHAPTER VI.

Look yonder! said little Henry a few mornings after to his mother, look at that poor old man with white hair and a long beard! see how he totters and leans on the top of his stick! he can hardly walk, mother!

My dear boy! he is very old and poor, and seems also to be very ill:—but see! he is going up to that carriage where there are some rich ladies! I dare say they will pity and relieve him. Let us come behind this hedge, and we shall hear all that passes.

The carriage stood at the gate of a fine house;—the servant was gone to enquire if the lady of the mansion was at home, when the beggar came to the carriage-door.

I hope, mother, they will give him something, said the child softly.

I hope so indeed, said the mother: but let us listen.

For Heaven's sake! said the old man in a feeble voice, bestow your charity upon a poor man:—give me but the smallest trifle, or I shall die for want of food!

The ladies looked at him, but took no notice, and continued talking with one another.

Pray, good ladies, bestow your charity, continued the old man, and Heaven will reward you!

The servant now returned.—Is Mrs. Beaumont at home? called out one of the ladies from the coach-window.

No, my lady, replied the servant.

Drive on then.

The carriage-door was shut, the foot-

man jumped up behind, and the horses sprang forward. The poor old man, leaning upon his stick, followed the carriage with his eyes till it was out of sight, and then feeling very faint and weary, he gave a deep sigh, and sat down by the road-side.

Oh, what cruel ladies! said Henry to his mother; they are gone, quite gone, and they have given the poor man nothing.—I wish I had something to give him, mother.

You shall have something to give him, my sweet child! You and I are beggars, Henry; but our condition, I bless God, is not so bad but there are many worse. I have still something left from that which the charity of the village children bestowed upon me, and am rich in comparison of that poor man, who says he has not a farthing in the

world. God forbid that I should see a fellow-creature starve while I can prevent it! Here, my child, this sixpence would have procured a night's lodging for us; if you can be contented to sleep without shelter to-night, you shall have this to give yourself to the poor man.

Mother, said the boy in a broken voice, while a tear started to his eye, *I* could be content to sleep every night on the cold ground; it would never hurt me; but I cannot be content to see you lie there too. Poor, poor old man! continued he, looking towards him, is there nothing I can give you?

My sweet, my generous child! said Mary, kissing him, I ought to endure any hardships with content whilst I am blessed with so good a child. Happily, my dear, you may relieve the wants of

this poor man with unmixed pleasure; for I have more money to spare for our nightly comfort, and what I said was only to put your courage and your generosity to the proof. Here, Henry, give this sixpence to the poor man.

The little boy, as proud as he was pleased, went up to the old man, and putting the sixpence into his withered hand, he said, Here, poor old fellow, this is for you to buy some dinner with.

The beggar was pleased at first with the sight of the silver; but, when he raised his eyes, and beheld the poor little ragged boy who presented it, he laid his hand upon the child's head, and prayed Heaven to bless him: but keep your money, my brave urchin, said he, for you want it as much as I do.

Mary now came forward, and pressed him to accept this trifle. She told him

she had more money, and could well spare it.

Heaven bless you! said the beggar, as he received the gift from her hand, Heaven bless you! and restore it to you seven-fold.

Yes, thought Mary to herself, Heaven I know will accept the humble offering, and repay it to my babes in this world or the next.

Soothed by this reflection, she continued her journey. She at length arrived in Shropshire, though still at some distance from the village where her travels were to end. Her purse was drained, and she was very weary; but her bosom beat with hope and gratitude, and she exulted in the near prospect of arriving at her journey's bourne, —of seeing once more the spot where she had passed so many happy days,—

of meeting with old friends and acquaintance,—and of obtaining an honourable employment by which she could support herself and children.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT is the matter, dearest mother? said Mary's little boy: you look quite ill, and you shake all over. What can be the matter?

Nothing, dear: at least—not much. I hope I shall be better soon,—if I sit down and rest awhile, said she, supporting her pale cheek upon his head, and squeezing his hand. The truth was, poor Mary had caught cold, by lying the night before upon the damp ground, and taking off her cloak to co-

ver her children. This, added to fatigue and anxiety, proved at last too much for her; and though she struggled to hide it from her feeling child, and even from herself, she was indeed very ill.

I wonder how far we are from Ludlow now, said she; for we have come a great way; I will try and walk on towards those houses yonder, and enquire.

Pray, what cottage is this, said she to a woman who was standing at her door, and how far are we from Dracot?

Not above two miles, said the woman.

Mary clasped her hands.

There, mistress, said the woman, not observing her agitation, you see those trees yonder; well, just below them, to the right of Ludlow, is the village of Dracot: keep on this road for a mile or so, and you'll be there, and a sweet place it is.

Mary's surprise and happiness at finding herself so near her journey's end, was so great as to deprive her of utterance. She no longer felt that she was sick and ill, or any thing but an impatience to proceed; and taking her boy by the hand, she went hastily on.

They walked for some time in silence, when suddenly the village of Dracot appeared, its pretty white cottages peeping through the trees, with the village spire in the midst bursting at once upon Mary's sight brought with it so many tender recollections, that (being before almost overpowered by illness and fatigue) she sank down, unable to proceed a step.

She could no longer hold her infant in her arms, and she laid it down by her side. The boy, quite frightened, began to cry, saying, What is the mat-

ter, dearest mother? Do come on to the village, and then somebody will take care of you.

But his mother did not hear; she had fainted away; her pale cheek reclined on her bosom, and her arms hung lifeless by her side.

Oh, wake, mother, wake! exclaimed the boy, while he sobbed aloud; but seeing that his mother did not wake or open her eyes, he looked around to see if any one was in sight that he could call to.

An officer in a naval uniform was walking at a little distance, and the child, on perceiving him, ran up to him with all his speed; and taking hold of the skirts of his coat, Come quick, said he, (pulling him with all his might) come, make haste, mother

is dying; come quick, or she will be dead!

Delighted with the simplicity and animated feeling of the child, the man took hold of his hand; told him not to frighten himself, and ran back with him to the place where his mother lay.

Mary now opened her eyes, and asked for her boy; but upon perceiving the stranger who held his hand, she looked up in his face in an expressive manner, as much as to say, You look very good, will you protect him?

Then trying to speak, she said, I believe I am going to die——oh, what will become of my orphan children?

Struck with the tenderest compassion, the stranger replied with warmth, *I will protect them.*

Will you? she answered quickly, will you indeed protect them? Then

clasping her hands, she raised her eyes to Heaven, but was so faint she could not utter a word.

The compassionate stranger called to a girl who was passing by, and directed her to his dwelling, to procure assistance and relief for the poor woman.

In the mean time Mary raised her languid head, and taking her little boy's hand, she said to him in a faint voice: My dear child, I feel I am going to be taken from you; I have only one legacy to leave you; it was given me by your uncle, my only brother, and amidst all my poverty and distress, I have never parted with it. Here, my dear Henry! said she, giving him a New Testament which she took from her bosom, promise me that you never will part with it. My dear brother's

name and my own are written there in his own hand; and should the goodness of Providence bring you together, this book will discover to him his nephew.

The stranger listened to her with much emotion; he seized the book with a trembling hand, saw his own name and hand-writing in the volume, and at the same moment falling on his knees by Mary's side,

My sister! my long lost sister! said he, in what a state do I find you!

My brother! said Mary, but she could say no more; again she fainted, and reclined in the arms of the stranger.

When she recovered her senses, she found herself lying on a soft bed with her infant beside her; her little boy was kneeling at the foot; her brother held her hand; while several women were

employing different means for her recovery.

Is this only a sweet dream? said she smiling, Oh! if it is, never let me awake again!

Is she well now? said the little boy.

She will be soon, said his uncle.

Are you indeed my brother? said Mary, again looking at his manly countenance; and are you not ashamed to acknowledge your poor sister?

My dear Mary, said he, much as we have both to say, much to hear and to relate, we must not talk at present; you must recover your strength and get well, and then I trust we shall have many happy hours together.

In a short time quiet, rest, and food, but still more ease and composure of mind, restored Mary to health and vigour; she quitted the bed of sickness,

and soon was well enough to tell her whole history to her brother, and he in turn related his, which seemed to be as prosperous and fortunate, as Mary's was wretched and dismal.

He was of a manly and steady disposition, and by his bravery and good conduct had won the esteem of his captain, had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and had acquired what to him appeared a considerable sum. It was in reality just enough to enable him to give a home to his sister and her children, and to supply them with food and clothing. Mary, said he to her with a smile, do you remember the day we parted, when I promised I would become a great man, and acquire a fortune for your sake? alas! I little thought how much you would need my services.

Such were the conversations that

passed between Mary and her brother. The latter grew daily more fond of the little boy, with whom at first sight he had been so struck. He dressed him in a new suit of clothes; and to please him the more, they were made like a sailor's uniform.

Cheered by the affectionate attentions of her brother, Mary recovered her spirits and her looks: the rose began to bloom upon her faded cheek, and smiles to brighten in her countenance. According to Mary's hopes, there were many in the village who remembered her, and were glad to see her living once more in their village.

Among these was the long-forgotten Ambrose. He had returned to the cottage of his parents upon the death of his father, a wealthy farmer, who left all his possessions to his son, on condition

he should provide for his mother during her life-time; and the virtuous Ambrose devoted not only his money, but his life, to her service.

Upon learning that Mary was a widow, and upon seeing her again, his former love for her returned, and he once more offered her his hand and heart. Mary was now however determined to be guided solely by her brother's wishes, to whom she owed so much gratitude.

Mary, said her brother, there is nothing I desire more than to see you married to Ambrose; I know him well, he is my best friend, and I am certain he will prove worthy of you. *I* shall soon be called away from you to follow the duties of my profession; and then what a happiness will it be to me, to leave you comfortably settled, and in such good protection!

Mary saw her duty, and immediately yielded to her brother's persuasions; and in marrying Ambrose, she secured to herself the best of husbands, and gave to her orphan children a tender and virtuous father.

Her brother however claimed the right of taking little Henry under his own care, and making a sailor of him. His parents promised to consent to this, when he was of a proper age to be sent to sea; and his mother comforted herself with the thought, that she should have two or three more years of his dear society.

The happy Ambrose took Mary to his home, where his mother was still to remain during her life; and Mary assisted her husband in tending and taking care of her.

Their domestic happiness was how-

ever for awhile suspended, when the hour arrived, in which their kind friend and brother was to leave the family-circle, and go again to distant seas. But what happiness for him to leave his dear sister thus, after all her afflictions, protected and blessed in the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity!

Adieu, my dearest brother! said she at the moment of his departure, while her heart heaved with convulsive sobs: Heaven bless and protect you through all the dangers you will be exposed to, and reward you for your goodness to me and to my children! Saying this, she held up her little ones by turns to kiss him.

Adieu, dear Mary! he replied; I am going far from you; but I shall pray constantly for the continuance of your present prosperity. With all our pains

and care however, it is not in the power of mortals to foresee or to prevent the inroads of misfortune and distress; but whether happiness or sorrow be our lot, let us but continue in the safe paths of virtue and integrity, and we shall meet again in a happier and better world.

From this simple narrative we trust our young readers may be led to the conviction, that no being on whom God has impressed the human form is to be despised, that virtue and an honest heart are to be found in every rank of society, and that the pulses of a beggar may sometimes beat with such pure and blameless feelings, as would do honour to the breast of a prince.

THE WIDOWER REMARRIED.

Good afternoon, Mrs. Simpson: how civil it is of you to come in this unceremonious sort of a way, to take a friendly dish of tea with me! Now do pull off your bonnet and cloak, and make yourself at home.—Pray, Mrs. Simpson, have you heard the news?

News! bless me, no. What news?—I have been quite shut up, out of the way of all news lately, I think.

Well, you needn't say, you know, where you had it; because, for aught I know, it may be a bit of a secret; for master's never chosen to confide a word of it to *me*, who manages all his affairs so faithfully. Which, I think,—but *howsomever* it's nothing to *me* to be

sure,—it can be nothing at all to *me*, one way or other.

Lord! I thinks it's doing you a great injustice, Mrs. Rawlins; such a housekeeper as you've been, such a "*faithful steward*," as the parson said this morning. But what is it, pray?

Why, master's a-going to be married again! what think you of that now?—and my poor mistress not been buried a twelvemonth yet, poor dear soul! I declare it gives me a shudder like, Mrs. Simpson.

Ay! so it does indeed. I'll take another cup, if you please, for it does turn one all over like, as you say.

Oh dear! it is such a pity now. If master would but have consulted me,—why, master and I agree so well together, every thing goes on as smooth as oil. Why, it was but the other day as we

had that great dinner, and master had settled to have veal-patties opposite the college-puddings. Well, after he was gone, I recollected as there was to be a fillet of veal at the bottom of the table; so, out of my own head, I put oyster patties in their room. And master, instead of being angry, praised me to the skies. To be sure I do understand those things, though I say it.

Indeed you do, Mrs. Rawlins, nobody better. I'll thank you for the toast, if you please.

Dear me! you eat nothing, Mrs. Simpson: now do make yourself at home. But, as I was a-saying, it is such a stroke like, to have a third person come between master and me, to domineer, and find fault, and put things into his head, that he would never have thought of. Lord, if he would but see his own in-

terest, he'd have no *go-betweens*, when things are going on so well. But folks are never contented, I thinks.

And, pray, is the daughter to be *fitched* home again?

Heigho! that's the worst part of the story, for the poor thing will lose her *fortin* by it.

How so, Mrs. Rawlins? How so?

Why, you must know,—stop, I'll just shut this *here* door, if you please,—you must know master's sister-in-law is quite vexed and mortified at this *here* sudden marriage. Ay, that she is: and well she may, poor thing! And more, she's so angry, as miss isto be taken away from her, and given up to the mercy of a mother-in-law, that she declares to her brother, she won't leave the poor thing the fine *fortin* she had intended for her. And I thinks myself, it's very

noble-minded in her, to *revenge* (as I may say) her poor sister's memory in this manner: it's quite according to all my notions of right and wrong.

I must leave my readers to form their own judgment upon Mrs. Rawlins's opinion of right and wrong. In the preceding conversation there was certainly more *wrong* than *right*. To do Mrs. Rawlins justice however, she was right in the first great and leading fact, that her master was going to be married again.

Mr. Egerton's first marriage took place when he was very young: it was one of those matches which was formed by anxious friends for *the good of the young people*. Mrs. Egerton was very young, very pretty, and very silly. She had fallen violently in love with Mr. Egerton at first sight; and her friends,

tenderly solicitous for her welfare, and perceiving that her health and spirits were affected, eagerly promoted the match; while at the same time the tender relatives of Mr. Egerton, wishing, with all the cravings of parental affection, to secure for their dear boy Miss Derwent's four thousand a year, hastened to settle all differences, to agree with all proposals, to forward all preparations, and (*all for the good of the young people*) to bring things to a conclusion.

Things were at last concluded; but an union which is not founded upon mutual esteem, is rarely productive of happiness. Mr. Egerton was an enlightened scholar, and a sensible man, —he required therefore to make him happy, that his wife should be a rational and congenial companion. He soon found that mere personal attractions

could ill supply the loss of intellectual endowments; and he looked in vain to his wife, for one who should be the confident of his thoughts, and his adviser in difficulty, who should share his tastes, and sympathise in his feelings. Mrs. Egerton was little more than an insipid beauty; for beauty is insipid when unadorned by sense and virtue.

Mrs. Egerton, in the mean time, thought it pretty and interesting to profess on all occasions the most exuberant attachment for her husband: this she carried to such an absurd extreme, as rather to give him pain than pleasure. In gratitude however, he endeavoured to display a return of affection, and treated her during her life with the utmost indulgence.

The birth of a little girl was an event that gave the greatest pleasure to its

father, and would also have endeared its mother to him more strongly, had she not overacted her part in trying to display fondness for her offspring.

Conscious that she looked to great advantage with her baby in her arms, she would frequently say to her husband in an affected tone, Ah! you do not love me! I know you do not; but I beseeeh you love my baby. When I die you will marry again, and my poor infant will have a strange mother. Oh, my dear husband (she would add, fixing on him her beautiful eyes, and laying her white hand on his), promise me, if you should have a second wife, to give my child to the care of my sister; do not (she added, with horror in her countenance), if you wish me to rest in peace, do not give my child to a mother-in-law.

Mr. Egerton saw with pity and contempt the folly and affectation of his wife's petition; but when, some time after, it was repeated upon her deathbed, his feelings overcame his better reason, and he was easily prevailed upon to give the promise required, that his Matilda, then only two years old, should be consigned to the care of her mother's sister during her life.

We find therefore that Mrs. Rawlins was wrong in her suggestions concerning Miss Egerton; for though "the aunt was vexed and mortified at the sudden marriage," yet she had not determined to "*revenge* her sister's memory," by any alteration in her will, as (according to their mutual wishes) it was agreed upon that her darling niece should continue under her protection.

Mr. Egerton, in his second wife, be-

held a living picture of that which his imagination had so often drawn; beauty of *mind*, adorned with outward charms, sense and wisdom joined to unaffected modesty. And in spite of the hints thrown out by Mrs. Rawlins, that a *third* person would interrupt the domestic harmony subsisting between herself and him, Mr. Egerton ventured to introduce a new mistress to his family mansion at Beech-Grove.

And now it was that he first began to enjoy "the calm sunshine of domestic life." His wife was a congenial and enlightened companion, and the education of their children formed their study and delight.

With regard to his daughter Matilda, Mr. Egerton felt perfectly happy in having obeyed the wishes of her mother respecting her. He knew his sister-in-

law to be a most excellent and respectable woman, and one who from her temper and habits was peculiarly fitted to educate a child: he knew also that she was wealthy, and would provide for her amply; he felt rejoiced therefore, that he was not obliged to burden his wife with a child that did not belong to her; and as he had never been particularly partial to Matilda, and was satisfied of her welfare, he very soon ceased to think of, or even to wish to see her.

Matilda in the mean time lived with her aunt in town, and grew up to be the comfort and delight of her life. Mrs. Manville lived entirely secluded from the gay world during the education of her niece; she saw no company, and Matilda was her sole companion. This excellent lady planned and regulated the education of her niece with the most tender solici-

tude. She had perceived and lamented the errors of her departed sister, and it was from similar errors that she was anxious to guard her niece.

Matilda, in her person, bore a striking resemblance to her mother; she possessed as large a share of beauty; and Mrs. Manville occupied herself in the affecting task of embellishing it with those graces, of which her mother's was destitute. She stored her mind with ideas, enlarged and cultivated her understanding, and at the same time instilled into her temper the charms of unaffected and simple modesty. Matilda became remarkable for her strong sense and quick capacity; and though in person she was the image of her mother, her mind bore a strong and decided resemblance to that of her father. Mrs. Manville preserved in her

niece a pious respect for her mother's memory, but she told her nothing of her situation in life, and Matilda expressed no curiosity on the subject; perfectly happy with her aunt, of whom she was dotingly fond, she rather feared than desired a change of fortune.

That peaceful enjoyment however, which rarely lasts beyond the period of infancy, Matilda was no longer to possess. As she grew up, her aunt wished her to receive those advantages of education, which she felt herself unable to bestow; and having endeavoured to fix her principles, and strengthen her character, she with little apprehension, though with much anxiety, sent her to a fashionable boarding-school in the metropolis.

After she had formed this plan, Mrs. Manville found it necessary to call up

all her resolution, all her good sense, to enable her to make the sacrifice. Painful indeed it was to her, to part with the darling object of all her best affections; the more painful, as she knew that the separation would be equally felt by Matilda, who trembled at the thought of quitting her aunt, to live among perfect strangers.

It was in vain that Mrs. Manville endeavoured to convince her of the advantage she would derive from it: for the first time in her life she ventured to maintain an opposite opinion.

Surely (said she) you can teach me all you know, and it cannot be necessary that I should be better informed than you are. Do not send me from you. To you I owe gratitude, duty, every thing; do not send me away.

Matilda, replied Mrs. Manville, if

you feel you owe me gratitude and duty, show it me in this instance, by a cheerful and ready compliance with the plan I have adopted for you.

Mrs. Manville said this in a more serious tone of voice than she was accustomed to employ, and Matilda ventured not a reply. Her good sense soon enabled her to overcome her feelings, and she promised a ready and cheerful obedience.

Mrs. Manville went herself to the school with her niece, that she might consign her with her own hands to Mrs. Gregory's care; and my readers must represent to themselves Matilda's feelings, when, as she was standing at the parlour-window, she beheld her aunt step into the carriage and drive away. She smiled however, and kissed her hand with an air of gaiety, while her aunt

could see her, and it was not till she was out of sight that she suffered her tears to flow.

The novelty of the scene which surrounded her, in a short time however served to dispel her grief. Mrs. Gregory, who was a charming woman, perceiving Matilda's timidity and suppressed sorrow, and aware that upon her first introduction she would be exposed to the stare, perhaps to the ridicule of some of her companions, offered to defer it till her spirits should be more composed, and Matilda accepted with gratitude her proposal of spending the first day or two in the parlour.

In the mean time the news of her arrival was spread around in the schoolroom, and "a new girl," "a new scholar," was whispered round.

Don't you long to see her? said one.

I wonder if she's pretty, said another.

But there was no need of wondering long, as the expected moment soon arrived, and holding the hand of Mrs. Gregory, Matilda was introduced into the school-room.

You seem as if you were unwilling to part with me, said Mrs. Gregory, smiling, you hold my hand so firmly; but I must resign you to one who I am sure will take care of you.

Saying this she joined Matilda's hand with that of her daughter Mary, and adding that she hoped they would be good friends together, she left the room.

Matilda's embarrassment increased, when upon casting her eyes round, she observed that all eyes were fixed upon her, and that she was regarded with curiosity and attention.

Mary Gregory however endeavoured to dissipate her fears, and taking her round the room, pointed out to her any thing that she thought would be likely to interest or amuse her. She succeeded happily, and in a short time had engaged Matilda in interesting conversation, while the surrounding multitude, having satisfied their curiosity with respect to Matilda's dress and appearance, ceased to regard her as an object of speculation.

When the eyes of her school-fellows were withdrawn from her, Matilda had leisure to gaze upon them, and she was much amused with observing their various faces and employments.

Mary in a low voice told her their different names and characters, and pointed out to her, with great good sense, some who were amusing as com-

panions, others who were desirable as friends; some who were beloved for their amiable qualities, and others who were disliked for bad ones.

Matilda was highly entertained. She thought Mary was a delightful girl, and hoped to make her a constant companion; but she was disappointed to find that, except during the hours of school, when she assisted in the tuition of the scholars, Mary seldom appeared, as she spent her time in the society of her mother.

And who, Mary (enquired Matilda), is that pretty girl who is sitting in the corner with her head upon her hand, and who seems so dejected and unhappy?

Poor Emily! replied Mary, she is indeed unhappy; but she indulges her sorrow too much. She has nothing to

lament but absence from home, which you and all around feel in common with herself, but since her arrival she has done little else than give way to tears and repinings: it is in vain to endeavour to comfort her: my mother has tried every means without effect; and believing her to be sullen, she thinks it better to leave her to herself to recover her serenity.

Matilda was particularly interested with the appearance of Emily; her compassion was excited for her; and while she pitied her sorrows, she almost forgot her own.

Poor girl! said she, perhaps she has been too fondly indulged at home; how hard for her to be sent from that home to a little world of strangers! I think I know what she feels,—she looks round upon all these new faces, and then she

thinks of her absent parents, who have been more than kind to her.

Matilda continued to gaze and pity, and Emily to weep, till the hour of repose arrived, when Matilda found, much to her delight, that Emily was to share an apartment with herself.

When they were left together, Matilda made many ineffectual attempts to converse with Emily; but, repulsed by her look of determined sullenness, she could not for some time gather courage to speak to her.

At last, when the curtains hid her from her sight, and there was no light in the room, except that which the glimmering rush-light afforded, she ventured to begin a conversation, and offered in the most affectionate manner, to do any thing in her power to comfort and make her happy; but it was in vain

she spoke, no reply was heard, and discouraged by this vain attempt, Matilda herself shed tears, till, exhausted by fatigue, she fell to sleep.

The first dawn of morning usually summoned the whole house to the duties of the day.

It happened one morning that Matilda had translated an exercise so much to the satisfaction of the French teacher, that she was recommended to Mrs. Gregory as deserving some particular reward. Mrs. Gregory, with a smile of approbation, declared to Matilda, that if she would make some request before the end of the day (provided it was within the compass of her ability), it should be complied with. Matilda thanked her, but felt that she should never be able to ask a favour of her governess.

During the rest of the day Matilda

was intreated on all sides to ask for different things.

Oh, my dear Miss Manville (for her aunt, with true maternal fondness, had insisted upon calling her by her own name, and she did not so much as remember to have heard her father's), do ask that we may have leave to go to the pastry-cook's this evening, you know we have just had our allowance paid.

Now, if you wish to oblige us one and all, said another, you will ask for a holiday tomorrow; surely you can have nothing better than a holiday.

Ask to go to the play, cried a third, that will be the best; do, my dear Matilda, ask to go to the new theatre; that will please us all as well as yourself.

I wish I could please you all, said Matilda smiling, but I fear that is impossible.

The dinner-bell here put an end to the conversation. Matilda continued to watch Emily with interest, she offered to assist her in her work—in her lessons—but Emily preserved her gloomy silence, and showed no gratitude for this attentive kindness.

It was just as they were all preparing to walk in the square, that an elegant carriage drove up to the door; the whole party rushed to the window.

It is my mother, exclaimed Emily, clasping her hands; and immediately she threw off her bonnet, expecting a summons to the drawing-room. Do I look as if I had been crying? said she, trying to look cheerful, and wiping her inflamed eyelids.

No, said the gentle Matilda, going up to her and assisting her to adjust her cap, you do not look as if you had been

crying now; how happy I am your mamma has come to comfort you!

How long they are before they send for me! said Emily peevishly.

But she had yet much longer to wait, and her patience was almost entirely exhausted, when, at length, the door opened, she made an involuntary spring towards it, and met the servant, who put a note into her hand and left the room.—Emily, astonished, opened it, and read as follows:

"How much am I disappointed, after having travelled from so great a distance to see my Emily, to find at my arrival, I cannot be permitted that delight!—O my dear child, for your own, for my sake, continue not a gloomy sullenness, hurtful to yourself, and displeasing to your friends. Let me, when

next I visit you, behold you restored to your usual serenity and sweetness of temper: it will greatly comfort

"Your affectionate mother."

Emily threw down the note, and burst into an agony of tears, and Matilda was scarcely less affected. The carriage still remained at the door. After a few minutes had elapsed, Mrs. Gregory appeared.

Matilda instantly ran up to her, and throwing herself into the most intreating attitude, exclaimed, "Dear madam, you promised to comply with my request—forgive Emily, and let her see her mother."

Mrs. Gregory raised Matilda with a look of approbation.

I cannot break my promise, said she, particularly to one so deserving. Emily,

Matilda pleads for you; you have leave to go to the drawing-room.

Emily, overcome by Matilda's persevering kindness, threw her arms round her neck, saying, she had not deserved it.

Do not let me detain you, said Matilda; fly to your mother; she will best be able to comfort you.

When Emily returned to the school-room, she ran immediately to Matilda, expressing remorse for her late conduct, and saying, she trusted they should be the best of friends in future:—but alas, she continued, as she took hold of Matilda's arm to walk, is it not hard, *is it not miserable*, to be sent from home?

Indeed, Emily, you do not know what it is to be really miserable. You should endeavour at least to be content, in whatever situation you are placed. It

is not, you know, worse for you than for the rest of your numerous companions.

I do not know why it is, but I think they do not feel so much as I do.

They do not give way to their feelings, Emily.

Were *you* very sorry to leave your home to come here, Matilda?

Indeed, Emily, I was; but from the instant I saw and pitied you, I entirely forgot my own sorrows.

Just at this moment a wretched-looking boy came up to them, holding up some pretty little painted wicker-baskets to sell.

What is your name, poor boy? said Matilda, taking the baskets from his hand: do not be afraid, I will buy them all, if no one else will.

Here, young ladies, said she, displaying them to her companions, here are

some beautiful baskets, of all shapes, sizes, and colours.

They were soon disposed of, and the boy received the money for them, saying, "Thank you, good ladies, and thank God, sister will not die now."

Matilda enquired what he meant, and where his sister was.

He said his sister was lying at home very ill.

And where are your father and mother?

"We've got none in the wide world," said the boy, "they died both *on* 'em, and left sister and I to take care of one another; and Patty makes these here to save us from starving: but she overworked herself last night. But this will buy her something to do her good."

The boy pulled off his hat, as he fi-

nished his speech, and was hastening away. Matilda asked permission to go and see his sister; this was granted; and Matilda and Emily, accompanied by one of the teachers, followed the boy home.

He led them to the door of a miserable-looking hovel, where, after they had ascended two or three narrow stairs, they entered a little wretched hole, for it could hardly be called a room, in which, stretched upon an old rug, lay a pretty little girl, looking as pale as death itself, and holding both her hands to her head, saying she was in great pain. By her side lay some little bundles of wicker, and near her was one basket half-made. Matilda took up the basket.

"Poor, dear little girl, (said she,) you have worked then, till you could work

no longer, to keep yourself and your brother from starving? Oh, Emily! here is a picture of *real misery*."

But is there no one to take care of this poor child? would they have left her here to die? said Emily.

Just as she was speaking, an ill-tempered, dirty-looking, old woman entered the room.

Good woman, said Matilda, this child is very ill indeed, and seems to be left quite alone.

She's none of mine (said the old woman, in a surly tone), none of mine; only lodges here.

But would you leave her here to die, because she is not yours? enquired Matilda.

"What can I do? (said the old wowan,) I can't afford to pay for doctors nor for doctor's stuff. I've had enough

brats of my own, and could hardly make shift to keep 'em.

And who pays for these children's lodging, and who buys their food? asked Matilda.

"They pays for it *theirselves*, (said the old woman) for they be *horphans*; and the girl makes these *here* baskets, and they gives me sixpence a week for this *here* room, which is little enough, and the rest I suppose goes in victuals; but I never cared to ask, for it's no business of mine."

Matilda and Emily were much shocked at the inhumanity of this woman; they felt inclined to reproach her with her conduct: but Matilda thought it would be wiser to practise forbearance with her for the present, and to bribe her to take better care of the poor invalid, till they could remove her into

safer hands. Matilda and Emily therefore produced their purses, and each gave some money into the hands of the old woman, charging her to put the child into a bed, to send for a surgeon, and to procure for it any thing that should be ordered. The features and appearance of the old woman underwent a sudden alteration at the sight of the money.

"Lord bless us! (she began) I'd no notion that the poor thing was in such a taking, because, my lady, when I was in here in the morning, my lady, the poor *cratur* was as busy as a bee, and as gay as a lark;—but I'll go myself for the doctor, and she shall want for nothing depend on't, my lady: poor dear soul!" (she added,) raising the child, and feeling her head.

Matilda and Emily waited to see the

child actually put to bed; and then (being warned by the teacher that it grew late) they renewed their injunctions to the woman, and bidding the little boy see that his sister was well taken care of, returned home.

At night, when they retired to rest, they conversed together for a considerable time, upon the events of the preceding day.

"How wicked was I (said the ingenuous Emily), to be giving way to such grief and discontent, while I was enjoying every comfort of life! Oh, Matilda, I shall never forget the sight of that poor little girl—it will make a lasting impression on my mind."

I am afraid such sights are not uncommon, my dear Emily; for my aunt has often told me, that there is more misery in the world than we can form any

idea of: but this thought ought to make us at least contented, while we are, as you say, enjoying every comfort.

Matilda, how very like my father you talk! That was just such a thing as he would have said, and spoken just like him; do you know, you often remind me of him, when you are in your grave humours. My father is so very grave, and he wants, I believe, to make me so too; but he will find that a hard matter; now you would just suit him, you are a girl after his own heart—so grave—so discreet——

Hush, dear Emily, do not laugh so loud.

What! are you forbidding me to laugh? A little while ago you would not let me cry. I cannot please you, Matilda.

You do please me, Emily; and though

I cannot exactly tell why, I like you better than any one I know, except my aunt.

You have no mother, I think you told me?

No, I lost my mother when I was scarcely two years old; but I have never felt the loss, for my dear aunt has well supplied a mother's place.

I wish you knew *my* mother, Matilda. I think, I am sure, you would like her very much; and I am certain she would dote upon you. I shall write to-morrow, and tell her what a dear friend I have found in you, that I am quite happy now, and shall be sorry to leave school, as I must then part with you.

Oh, that will be saying too much, Emily, and she will doubt your sincerity; but we must not talk any more now, for it is very late.

The next day, Matilda and Emily gave an account of the preceding day's adventure to their governess, and obtained permission to pay another visit to their little patient.

They found the little girl much better, but still in a very helpless state. Upon enquiry they discovered that the woman of the house had been out all the morning, and would not be back till night; and that the child in the mean time was left neglected and alone. They therefore agreed to place her under better and more humane care.

This was easily done. They found out a worthy and kind-hearted woman, who was willing for the same money, to give them a room in her clean, tidy house; and here they had the satisfaction of seeing the poor little brother and sister quite comfortable and happy.

As for the boy, he hardly knew how to express his joy, when he saw his sister sitting up in a clean little bed, eating a bason of warm broth, and looking almost well again.

The hours of Emily and Matilda now passed so agreeably, in cheerful labour, in pleasant recreation, and the sweet offices of friendship and charity, that day after day fled rapidly away; and, happy in one another's society, these inseparable companions felt nothing to wish. Part of their occupation was in making caps, handkerchiefs and other little necessaries for their devoted and fatherless *protégée* and her brother.

Many of their schoolfellows, who consumed what they termed their play-hours in mere idle play, nay, some in staring about, and doing nothing, could

not forbear envying Matilda and Emily, as they sat together in a corner of the room at a neat little work-table, with their baskets before them, both so usefully and busily employed.

In about a week's time they had finished a pretty collection of things; and they filled a basket with them, and presented them to Susan, who having recovered her health and strength, was now able to resume her amiable industry.

How true it is, said Emily, that the best way to relieve our own sorrow, is to endeavour to soothe the distress of others! Oh, Matilda, your example and advice will make me what I ought to be, and what my parents wish to see me. My mother used to pray that, when I came to school, I might find a friend like yourself, whom I could love,

and whose example and friendship would be a benefit to me. Her prayers are heard; you are, Matilda, that dear friend.

And now the happy time drew near,
When girls from school to home repair.

Every mother had received a letter from her daughter, which upon opening she found to contain, in copper-plate style,

"*Honoured Madam,*

"*I have the pleasure to inform you our holidays are fixed for the 26th of July, &c.*"

That eventful day was now arrived, and the delightful bustle commenced. Carriages driving to the door, clothes packing, trunks cording, accompts settling, farewells taking, and "good bye, good bye," echoed by many tongues, whose joyful faces seemed to say, "How glad I am to leave you!"

There was one parting however, one farewell, pronounced with sorrow; and that sorrow was heartfelt and sincere. When Matilda and Emily bade adieu to one another, they both experienced the pang which rends the heart, at a separation from those we love. Emily, when she returned home, was to revisit school no more; and therefore, though Matilda bade her hope that chance might at some future period bring them together, yet they could foresee no likely prospect of a meeting.

Comfort yourself, dear Emily, said Matilda, before she stepped into her aunt's carriage which waited for her at the door, and do not indulge in useless sorrow: remember the little girl and the wicker-baskets! Return in spirits to your happy home; and let us cherish the hope, that some future day we may have the happiness of seeing one another.

Oh, Matilda! stay one moment longer; let me at least endeavour to express my gratitude.

Oh! do not talk of gratitude to me, Emily; we are friends and equals, and our feelings of love and gratitude are mutual.

No, Matilda, we are not equals—I feel I am inferior to you; but my parents will I hope find me improved, and to you it is owing that I am so.

Farewell, dear Emily, said Matilda, disengaging herself from her warm embraces; for she felt unable any longer to repress her feelings, and had Emily detained her another minute, she must have given vent to them in a flood of tears.

When Emily returned home, her anxious parents were truly delighted at perceiving the striking improvement in her mind and manners; and they both

felt grateful to the young friend, to whom, as Emily assured them, she was indebted for every thing. In the society of her parents, and brothers and sisters, Emily could not fail of being happy: she found such full employment in conversing with her mother, in playing duets with her sister, in teaching her little brothers to read, and in nursing the baby, that she had no time to indulge in grief for the loss of her friend.

Matilda, upon arriving at her aunt's house, found her in a declining state of health. Mrs. Manville however preserved her usual serenity and cheerfulness. She expressed delight at having Matilda again with her, and rejoiced in witnessing the progress she had made in her different studies. She listened with pleasure wh ile Matilda sang, or

played on her harp; but her gaiety, alas! was forced, and only assumed in the presence of her niece. She was convinced that her end was approaching; and indeed her decay was so sudden and so visible, that Matilda, from native sagacity, and affection merely, grew to forebode the worst.

Mrs. Manville was shortly after confined to her room, which she never afterwards quitted. Matilda nursed her with constant and unwearied care; she sat by her side all day, and at last all night.

Feeling herself grow hourly worse, Mrs. Manville desired to know the truth of her situation, and the physician pronounced her case hopeless. She sent immediately for her brother, that she might resign Matilda to his protection; and her alarm lest he should

not arrive in time, considerably increased her indisposition.

In the mean time she endeavoured to prepare Matilda's mind for the event that was to take place; she acquainted her with the circumstances of her birth and situation, and prepared her for the reception of her father, to whose care she was now to be consigned. Poor Matilda was overwhelmed with grief at the idea of losing her aunt, and trembled at the very thought of being committed to the care of strangers; but she was much too sensible to give way to her feelings. She constantly maintained a complete command over herself, and assumed an appearance of content, nay even of cheerfulness, which afforded the greatest comfort to the mind of Mrs. Manville.

Mr. Egerton hastened to town upon

the receipt of his sister-in-law's letter. He was much grieved at her sudden illness, and shocked at the alarming state in which he found her.

Upon his entering her aunt's room, Matilda shrunk timidly from his sight, and remained concealed from his view, till her aunt stretched out her hand, and bade her embrace her father.

Mr. Egerton gave an involuntary start, when he beheld Matilda; she seemed to him the living image of her mother, and she looked at this moment so pale and so melancholy, that the likeness struck him with horror; he almost shuddered, and embraced her with coldness.

My brother, said Mrs. Manville in her last moments, I resign to you your child, and humbly hope I have performed my duty by her: what she has

been to me no words can express; may she be the same to you, and then you *must love* her with all the fervency I wish.

Matilda, at these words, took her aunt's hand, and pressed it to her lips; but finding she could not restrain her tears, she turned aside to pour out a cordial draught; and presenting it to her aunt, she bade her not talk lest it should fatigue her.

Mr. Egerton looked at her at this moment, and struck with the beauty of her countenance and the gracefulness of her manner, he thought her quite angelic.

Ah! thought he, she certainly possesses the *beauty* of her mother: if her *mind* corresponds with her person, what a treasure shall I possess!

Matilda, continued Mrs. Manville in

a feeble tone, let me talk now, for these are perhaps the last words you will ever hear from me.

Matilda fell on her knees by the bedside; and her aunt in the most tender manner pronounced upon her her blessing, and shortly after closed her eyes for ever.

The conduct and appearance of Matilda deeply interested and affected the heart of her father; he reproached himself bitterly for having so long neglected his daughter, but felt justly punished in having endured so long the loss of her society. He now resolved to make amends for his former neglect, and determined during his future life, that her happiness should be the object of his study.

He remained in town with his daughter, till after the funeral had taken place,

and Matilda was dressed in deep mourning; her innate piety forbade her to give way too long to the indulgence of her grief, and the kindness of her father soothed and dissipated her fears.

In their journey together, Mr. Egerton endeavoured to raise her spirits by repeated promises of love and tenderness: he assured her no pains should be spared to make her easy and comfortable, that Mrs. Egerton would be, in the real sense of the word, a *mother* to her, that he was certain their minds were congenial, and that they would love and esteem one another. Her new brothers and sisters also, he hoped, would prove interesting and amusing companions; his eldest daughter, in particular, he trusted, he said, would enjoy the advantage and pleasure of her friendship,

Matilda in return, endeavoured to express her sense of his kindness, and of her own peculiar good fortune, in possessing such kind friends after the loss of her aunt.

In such interesting conversation, they beguiled the time, till they arrived at Beech-Grove; but, notwithstanding what had passed, Matilda, naturally timid, felt alarmed at the idea of her introduction to strangers. Knowing, however, it was an event that must happen, she called up her courage to sustain it.

Mr. Egerton took hold of her trembling hand, to introduce her in form to his wife and eldest daughter. How great was his surprise when, upon opening the door, Matilda and his daughter Emily, both gave an involuntary scream, and in an instant were in one another's arms! The mystery was soon

explained, when Emily exclaimed, Embrace her, my dear mother, embrace your *daughter !—her* to whom you owe my improvement, who has been a true friend to me, and whom I may now call my *sister !*

My sister! said Matilda, bursting into tears: do I indeed find a *sister*, in one whom I have loved so well—so long?

The pleasure experienced by Mr. and Mrs. Egerton at this event, is not to be described: they had both been greatly interested for the sweet girl, to whom, from Emily's account, they owed so much; they longed to see and to reward her; they now discovered her in the person of their *child !*

Her appearance and character confirmed all that Emily had related, and they felt it would be their future delight to endeavour to repay her services.

Matilda was equally delighted with her new parents: her mother-in-law, she thought the most delightful of women: and in the society of Emily, she soon felt perfectly happy: and often would they agree together, that female friendship, so pure, so lasting, was scarcely to be expected between any but SISTERS.

THE END.

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